Children of Men

By BRUNO LESSING

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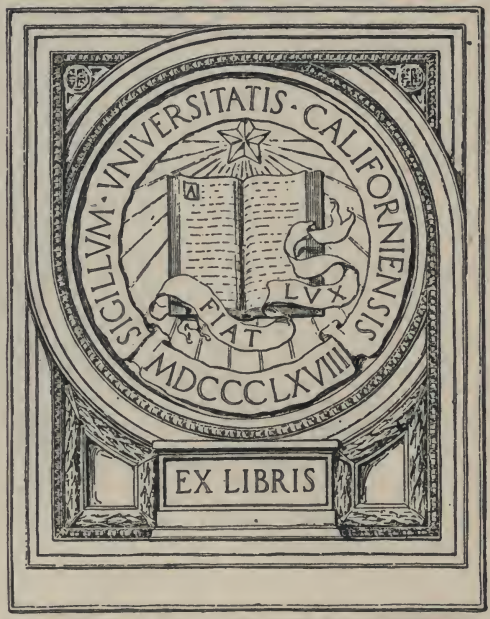

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CHILDREN OF MEN

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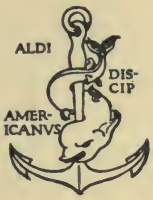
" ' The sheep are coming ! They're coming over the hill ! Watch, liebchen ; watch, precious !' "

CHILDREN OF MEN

BY

BRUNO LESSING



"For He doth not afflict willingly
nor grieve the children of men."

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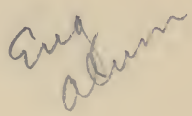

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THE END OF THE TASK

THE END OF THE TASK

I

The sewing-machines whirred like a thousand devils. You have no idea what a noise thirty sewing-machines will make when they are running at full speed. Each machine is made up of dozens of little wheels and cogs and levers and ratchets, and each part tries to pound, scrape, squeak and bang and roar louder than all the others. The old man who went crazy last year in this very same shop used to sit in the cell where they chained him, with his fingers in his ears, to keep out the noise of the sewing-machines. He said the incessant din was eating into his brains, and, time and again, he tried to dash out those poor brains against the padded wall.

The sewing-machines whirred and roared and clicked, and the noise drowned every other sound. Braun finished garment after garment and arranged them in a pile beside his machine. When there were twenty in the pile he paused in his work

—if your eyes were shut you would never have known that one machine had stopped—and he carried the garments to the counter, where the marker gave him a ticket for them. Then he returned to his machine. This was the routine of his daily labour from seven o'clock in the morning until seven o'clock at night. The only deviation from this routine occurred when Lizschen laid the twentieth garment that she had finished upon her pile and Braun saw her fragile figure stoop to raise the pile. Then his machine would stop, in two strides he would be at her side, and with a smile he would carry the garments to the counter for her and bring her the ticket for them. Lizschen would cease working to watch him, and when he handed her the ticket she would smile at him, and sometimes, when no one was looking, she would seize his hand and press it tightly against her cheek—oh! so tightly, as if she were drowning, and that hand were a rock of safety. And, when she resumed her work, a tear would roll slowly over the very spot where his hand had rested, tremble for an instant upon her pale cheek, and then fall upon the garment where the needle would sew it

firmly into the seam. But you never would have known that two machines had stopped for a moment; there were twenty-eight others to keep up the roaring and the rattling and the hum.

On and on they roared. There was no other sound to conflict with or to vary the monotony. At each machine sat a human being working with hand, foot, and eye, watching the flashing needle, guarding the margin of the seams, jerking the cloth hither and thither quickly, accurately, watching the spool to see that the thread ran freely, oiling the gear with one hand while the other continued to push the garment rapidly under the needle, the whole body swaying, bending, twisting this way and that to keep time and pace with the work. Every muscle of the body toiled, but the mind was free—free as a bird to fly from that suffocating room out to green fields and woods and flowers. And Braun was thinking.

Linder had told him of a wonderful place where beautiful pictures could be looked at for nothing. It was probably untrue. Linder was not above lying. Braun had been in this country six long years, and in all that time he had never found any-

thing that could be had for nothing. Yet Linder said he had seen them. Paintings in massive gold frames, real, solid gold, and such paintings! Woodland scenes and oceans and ships and cattle and mountains, and beautiful ladies—such pictures as the theatrical posters and the lithograph advertisements on the streets displayed, only these were real. And it cost nothing to look at them!

Nineteen—twenty! That completed the pile. It had taken about an hour, and he had earned seven cents. He carried the pile to the counter, received his ticket, and returned to his machine, stopping only to smile at Lizschen, who had finished but half a pile in that time, and who looked so white and tired, yet smiled so sweetly at him—then on with his work and thoughts.

He would take Lizschen to see them. It was probably all a lie, but the place was far, far uptown, near Madison Square—Braun had never been north of Houston Street—and the walk might do Lizschen good. He would say nothing to her about the pictures until he came to the place and found out for himself if Linder had told the truth. Otherwise the disappointment might do her harm.

Poor Lizschen! A feeling of wild, blind rage overwhelmed Braun for an instant, then passed away, leaving his frame rigid and his teeth tightly clenched. While it lasted he worked like an automaton, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, feeling nothing save a chaotic tumult in his heart and brain that could find no vent in words, no audible expression save in a fierce outcry against fate—resistless, remorseless fate. A few months ago these attacks had come upon him more frequently, and had lasted for hours, leaving him exhausted and ill. But they had become rarer and less violent; there is no misfortune to which the human mind cannot ultimately become reconciled. Lizschen was soon to die. Braun had rebelled; his heart and soul, racked almost beyond endurance, had cried out against the horror, the injustice, the wanton cruelty, of his brown-eyed, pale-cheeked Lizschen wasting away to death before his eyes. But there was no hope, and he had gradually become reconciled. The physician at the public dispensary had told him she might live a month or she might live a year longer, he could not foretell more accurately, but of ultimate recovery there was no hope on

earth. And Braun's rebellious outbursts against cruel fate had become rarer and rarer. Do not imagine that these emotions had ever shaped themselves in so many words, or that he had attempted by any process of reasoning to argue the matter with himself or to see vividly what it all meant, what horrible ordeal he was passing through, or what the future held in store for him. From his tenth year until his twentieth Braun had worked in factories in Russia, often under the lash. He was twenty-six, and his six years in this country had been spent in sweatshops. Such men do not formulate thoughts in words: they feel dumbly, like dogs and horses.

II

The day's work was done. Braun and Lizschen were walking slowly uptown, hand in hand, attracting many an inquiring, half-pitying glance. She was so white, he so haggard and wild-eyed. It was a delightful spring night, the air was balmy and soothing, and Lizschen coughed less than she had for several days. Braun had spoken of a pic-

ture he had once seen in a shop-window in Russia. Lizschen's eyes had become animated.

"They are so wonderful, those painters," she said. "With nothing but brushes they put colours together until you can see the trees moving in the breeze, and almost imagine you hear the birds in them."

"I don't care much for trees," said Braun, "or birds either. I like ships and battle pictures where people are doing something great."

"Maybe that is because you have always lived in cities," said Lizschen. "When I was a girl I lived in the country, near Odessa, and oh, how beautiful the trees were and how sweet the flowers! And I used to sit under a tree and look at the woods across the valley all day long. Ah, if I could only——!"

She checked herself and hoped that Braun had not heard. But he had heard and his face had clouded. He, too, had wished and wished and wished through many a sleepless night, and now he could easily frame the unfinished thought in Lizschen's mind. If he could send her to the country, to some place where the air was warm and

dry, perhaps her days might be prolonged. But he could not. He had to work and she had to work, and he had to look on and watch her toiling, toiling, day after day, without end, without hope. The alternative was to starve.

They came to the place that Linder had described, and, surely enough, before them rose a huge placard announcing that admission to the exhibition of paintings was free. The pictures were to be sold at public auction at the end of the week, and for several nights they were on inspection. The young couple stood outside the door a while, watching the people who were going in and coming out; then Braun said:

"Come, Lizschen, let us go in. It is free."

Lizschen drew back timidly. "They will not let people like us go in. It is for nobility." But Braun drew her forward.

"They can do no more than ask us to go out," he said. "Besides, I would like to have a glimpse of the paintings."

With many misgivings Lizschen followed him into the building, and found herself in a large hall, brilliantly illuminated, walled in with paintings

whose gilt frames shone like fiery gold in the bright light of numerous electric lamps. For a moment the sight dazzled her, and she gasped for breath. The large room, with its soft carpet, the glittering lights and reflections, the confused mass of colours that the paintings presented to her eyes, and the air of charm that permeates all art galleries, be they ever so poor, were all things so far apart from her life, so foreign not only to her experience, but even to her imagination, that the scene seemed unreal at first, as if it had been taken from a fairy tale. Braun was of a more phlegmatic temperament, and not easily moved. The lights merely made his eyes blink a few times, and after that he saw only Lizschen's face. He saw the blood leave it and a bright pallor overspread her cheeks, saw the frail hand move convulsively to her breast, a gesture that he knew so well, and feared that she was about to have a coughing spell. Then, suddenly, he saw the colour come flooding back to her face, and he saw her eyes sparkling, dancing with a joy that he had never seen in them before. Her whole frame seemed suddenly to become animated with a new life and vigour. Somewhat startled

by this transformation he followed her gaze. Lizschen was looking at a painting.

"What is it, dear?" he asked.

"The picture," she said in a whisper. "The green fields and that tree! And the road! It stretches over the hill! The sun will set, too, very soon. Then the sheep will come over the top of the hill. Oh, I can almost hear the leader's bell! And there is a light breeze. See the leaves of the tree; they are moving! Can't you feel the breeze? Oh, darling, isn't it wonderful? I never saw anything like that before."

Braun looked curiously at the canvas. To his eyes it presented a woodland scene, very natural, to be sure, but not more natural than nature, and equally uninteresting to him. He looked around him to select a painting upon which he could expend more enthusiasm.

"Now, there's the kind I like, Lizschen," he said. "That storm on the ocean, with the big ship going to pieces. And that big picture over there with all the soldiers rushing to battle."

He found several others and was pointing out what he found to admire in them, when, happening

to look at his companion's face, he saw that her eyes were still fastened upon the woodland picture, and he realised that she had not heard a word of what he had said. He smiled at her tenderly.

"Ah, Lizschen," he said, "if I were rich I would take that picture right off the wall and give them a hundred dollars for it, and we would take it home with us so that Lizschen could look at it all day long."

But still Lizschen did not hear. All that big room, with its lights and its brilliant colourings, and all those people who had come in, and even her lover at her side had faded from Lizschen's consciousness. The picture that absorbed all her being had ceased to be a mere beautiful painting. Lizschen was walking down that road herself; the soft breeze was fanning her fevered cheeks, the rustling of the leaves had become a reality; she was walking over the hill to meet the flock of sheep, for she could hear the shepherd's dog barking and the melodious tinkling of the leader's bell.

From the moment of their entrance many curious glances had been directed at them. People wondered who this odd-looking, ill-clad couple could

be. When Lizschen became absorbed in the woodland scene and stood staring at it as if it were the most wonderful thing on earth, those who observed her exchanged glances, and several onlookers smiled. Their entrance, Lizschen's bewilderment, and then her ecstasy over the painting had all happened in the duration of three or four minutes. The liveried attendants had noticed them and had looked at one another with glances that expressed doubt as to what their duty was under the circumstances. Clearly these were not the kind of people for whom this exhibition had been arranged. They were neither lovers of art nor prospective purchasers. And they looked so shabby and so distressingly poor and ill-nourished.

Finally one attendant, bolder than the rest, approached them, and tapping Braun lightly upon the sleeve, said, quite good-naturedly:

"I think you've made a mistake."

Braun looked at him and shook his head and turned to Lizschen to see if she understood. But Lizschen neither saw nor heard. Then the man, seeing that he was dealing with foreigners, became more abrupt in his demeanour, and, with a grunt,

pointed to the door. Braun understood. To be summarily ordered from the place seemed more natural to him than to be permitted to remain unmolested amid all that splendour. It was more in keeping with the experiences of his life. "Come, Lizschen," he said, "let us go." Lizschen turned to him with a smiling face, but the smile died quickly when she beheld the attendant, and she clutched Braun's arm. "Yes, let us go," she whispered to him, and they went out.

III

On the homeward journey not a word was spoken. Braun's thoughts were bitter, rebellious; the injustice of life's arrangements rankled deeply at that moment, his whole soul felt outraged, fate was cruel, life was wrong, all wrong. Lizschen, on the other hand, walked lightly, in a state of mild excitement, all her spirit elated over the picture she had seen. It had been but a brief communion with nature, but it had thrilled the hidden chords of her nature, chords of whose existence she had never dreamed before. Alas! the laws of this same

beautiful nature are inexorable. For that brief moment of happiness Lizschen was to submit to swift, terrible punishment. Within a few steps of the dark tenement which Lizschen called home a sudden weakness came upon her, then a violent fit of coughing which racked her frail body as though it would render it asunder. When she took her hands from her mouth Braun saw that they were red. A faintness seized him, but he must not yield to it. Without a word he gathered Lizschen in his arms and carried her through the hallway into the rear building and then up four flights of stairs to the apartment where she lived.

Then the doctor came—he was a young man, with his own struggle for existence weighing upon him, and yet ever ready for such cases as this where the only reward lay in the approbation of his own conscience—and Braun hung upon his face for the verdict.

"It is just another attack like the last," he was saying to himself. "She will have to lie in bed for a day, and then she will be just as well as before. Perhaps it may even help her! But it is nothing more serious. She has had many of them.

I saw them myself. It is not so terribly serious. Not yet. Oh, it cannot be yet! Maybe, after a long time—but not yet—it is too soon." Over and over again he argued thus, and in his heart did not believe it. Then the doctor shook his head and said: "It's near the end, my friend. A few days—perhaps a week. But she cannot leave her bed again."

Braun stood alone in the room, upright, motionless, with his fists clenched until the nails dug deep into the skin, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, feeling nothing. His eyes were dry, his lips parched. The old woman with whom Lizschen lived came out and motioned to him to enter the bedroom. Lizschen was whiter than the sheets, but her eyes were bright, and she was smiling and holding out her arms to him. "You must go now, *Liebchen*," she said faintly. "I will be all right to-morrow. Kiss me good-night, and I will dream about the beautiful picture." He kissed her and went out without a word. All that night he walked the streets.

When the day dawned he went to her again. She was awake and happy. "I dreamt about it all

night, *Liebchen*," she said, joyfully. "Do you think they would let me see it again?"

He went to his work, and all that day the roar of the machines set his brain a-whirring and a-roaring as if it, too, had become a machine. He worked with feverish activity, and when the machines stopped he found that he had earned a dollar and five cents. Then he went to Lizschen and gave her fifty cents, which he told her he had found in the street. Lizschen was much weaker, and could only speak in a whisper. She beckoned to him to hold his ear to her lips, and she whispered:

"*Liebchen*, if I could only see the picture once more."

"I will go and ask them, darling," he said. "Perhaps they will let me bring it to you."

Braun went to his room and took from his trunk a dagger that he had brought with him from Russia. It was a rusty, old-fashioned affair which even the pawnbrokers had repeatedly refused to accept. Why he kept it or for what purpose he now concealed it in his coat he could not tell. His mind had ceased to work coherently: his brain was now a machine, whirring and roaring like a thou-

sand devils. Thought? Thought had ceased. Braun was a machine, and machines do not think.

He walked to the picture gallery. He had forgotten its exact location, but some mysterious instinct guided him straight to the spot. The doors were already opened, but the nightly throng of spectators had hardly begun to arrive. And now a strange thing happened. Braun entered and walked straight to the painting of the woodland scene that hung near the door. There was no attendant to bar his progress. A small group of persons, gathered in front of a canvas that hung a few feet away, had their backs turned to him, and stood like a screen between him and the employees of the place. Without a moment's hesitation, without looking to right or to left, walking with a determined stride and making no effort to conceal his purpose, and, at the same time, oblivious of the fact that he was unobserved, Braun approached the painting, raised it from the hook, and, with the wire dangling loosely from it, took the painting under his arm and walked out of the place. If he had been observed, would he have

brought his dagger into use? It is impossible to tell. He was a machine, and his brain was roaring. Save for one picture that rose constantly before his vision, he was blind. All that he saw was Lizschen, so white in her bed, waiting to see the woodland picture once more.

He brought it straight to her room. She was too weak to move, too worn out to express any emotion, but her eyes looked unutterable gratitude when she saw the painting.

"Did they let you have it?" she whispered.

"They were very kind," said Braun. "I told them you wanted to see it and they said I could have it as long as I liked. When you are better I will take it back."

Lizschen looked at him wistfully. "I will never be better, *Liebchen*," she whispered.

Braun hung the picture at the foot of the bed where Lizschen could see it without raising her head, and then went to the window and sat there looking out into the night. Lizschen was happy beyond all bounds. Her eyes drank in every detail of the wonderful scene until her whole being became filled with the delightful spirit that pervaded

and animated the painting. A master's hand had imbued that deepening blue sky with the sadness of twilight, the soft, sweet pathos of departing day, and Lizschen's heart beat responsive to every shade and shadow. In the waning light every outline was softened; here tranquillity reigned supreme, and Lizschen felt soothed. Yet in the distance, across the valley, the gloom of night had begun to gather. Once or twice Lizschen tried to penetrate this gloom, but the effort to see what the darkness was hiding tired her eyes.

IV

The newspapers the next day were full of the amazing story of the stolen painting. They told how the attendants at the gallery had discovered the break in the line of paintings and had immediately notified the manager of the place, who at once asked the number of the picture.

"It's number thirty-eight," they told him. He seized a catalogue, turned to No. 38, and turned pale. "It's Corot's 'Spring Twilight!'" he cried. "It cost the owner three thousand dollars, and we're responsible for it!"

The newspapers went on to tell how the police had been notified, and how the best detectives had been set to work to trace the stolen painting, how all the theives' dens in New York had been ransacked, and all the thieves questioned and cross-questioned, all the pawnshops searched—and it all had resulted in nothing. But such excitement rarely leaks into the Ghetto, and Braun, at his machine, heard nothing of it, knew nothing of it, knew nothing of anything in the world save that the machines were roaring away in his brain and that Lizschen was dying. As soon as his work was done he went to her. She smiled at him, but was too weak to speak. He seated himself beside the bed and took her hand in his. All day long she had been looking at the picture; all day long she had been wandering along the road that ran over the hill, and now night had come and she was weary. But her eyes were glad, and when she turned them upon Braun he saw in them love unutterable and happiness beyond all description. His eyes were dry; he held her hand and stroked it mechanically; he knew not what to say. Then she fell asleep and he sat there hour after hour,

heedless of the flight of time. Suddenly Lizschen sat upright, her eyes wide open and staring.

"I hear them," she cried. "I hear them plainly. Don't you, *Liebchen?* The sheep are coming! They're coming over the hill! Watch, *Liebchen;* watch, precious!"

With all the force that remained in her she clutched his hand and pointed to the painting at the foot of the bed. Then she swayed from side to side, and he caught her in his arms.

"Lizschen!" he cried. "Lizschen!" But her head fell upon his arm and lay motionless.

The doctor came and saw at a glance that the patient was beyond his ministering. "It is over, my friend," he said to Braun. At the sound of a voice Braun started, looked around him quite bewildered, and then drew a long breath which seemed to lift him out of the stupor into which he had fallen. "Yes, it is over," he said, and, according to the custom of the orthodox, he tore a rent in his coat at the neck to the extent of a hand's breadth. Then he took the painting under his arm and left the house, going to a Gallery.

It was now nearly two o'clock in the morning

and the streets were deserted. A light rain had begun to fall, and Braun took off his coat to wrap it around his burden. He walked like one in a dream, seeing nothing, hearing nothing save a dull monotonous roar which seemed to come from all directions and to centre in his brain.

The doors of the gallery were closed and all was dark. Braun looked in vain for a bell, and after several ineffectual taps on the door began to pound lustily with his fist and heel. Several night stragglers stopped in the rain, and presently a small group had gathered. Questions were put to Braun, but he did not hear them. He kicked and pounded on the door, and the noise resounded through the streets as if it would rouse the dead. Presently the group heard the rattling of bolts and the creaking of a rusty key in a rusty lock, and all became quiet. The door swung open, and a frightened watchman appeared.

"What's the matter? Is there a fire?" he asked.

A policeman made his way through the group, and looked inquiringly from Braun to the watchman. Without uttering a word Braun held out

the painting, and at the sight of it the watchman uttered a cry of amazement and delight.

"It's the stolen Corot!" he exclaimed. Then turning to Braun, "Where did you get it? Who had it? Do you claim the reward?"

Braun's lips moved, but no sound came from them, and he turned on his heel and began to walk off, when the policeman laid a hand on his shoulder.

"Not so fast, young man. You'll have to give some kind of an account of how you got this," he said.

Braun looked at him stupidly, and the policeman became suspicious. "I guess you'd better come to the station-house," he said, and without more ado walked off with his prisoner. Braun made no resistance, felt no surprise, offered no explanation. At the station-house they asked him many questions, but Braun only looked vacantly at the questioner, and had nothing to say. They locked him in a cell over night, a gloomy cell that opened on a dimly lighted corridor, and there Braun sat until the day dawned, never moving, never speaking. Once, during the night, the watchman on duty in this corridor thought he heard a voice whisper-

ing " Lizschen! Lizschen!" but it must have been the rain that now was pouring in torrents.

V

"There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest.

"There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor.

"The small and the great are there; and the servant is free from his master."

It is written in Israel that the rabbi must give his services at the death-bed of even the lowliest. The coffin rested on two stools in the same room in which she died; beside it stood the rabbi, clad in sombre garments, reading in a listless, mechanical fashion from the Hebrew text of the Book of Job, interpolating here and there some time-worn, commonplace phrase of praise, of exhortation, of consolation. He had not known her; this was merely part of his daily work.

The sweatshop had been closed for an hour; for one hour the machines stood silent and deserted; the toilers were gathered around the coffin, listening to the rabbi. They were pale and gaunt, but not from grief. The machines had done that.

They had rent their garments at the neck, to the extent of a hand's breadth, but not from grief. It was the law. A figure that they had become accustomed to see bending over one of the machines had finished her last garment. Dry-eyed, in a sort of mild wonder, they had come to the funeral services. And some were still breathing heavily from the morning's work. After all, it was pleasant to sit quiet for one hour.

Someone whispered the name of Braun, and they looked around. Braun was not there.

"He will not come," whispered one of the men. "It is in the newspaper. He was sent to prison for three years. He stole something. A picture, I think. I am not sure."

Those who heard slowly shook their heads. There was no feeling of surprise, no shock. And what was there to say? He had been one of them. He had drunk out of the same cup with them. They knew the taste. What mattered the one particular dreg that he found? They had no curiosity. In the case of Nitza, it was her baby who was dying because she could not buy it the proper food. Nitza had told them. And so when Nitza

cut her throat they all knew what she had found in the cup. Braun hadn't told—but what mattered it? Probably something more bitter than gall. And three years in prison? Yes. To be sure. He had stolen something.

"*Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery,*" droned the rabbi, "*and life unto the bitter in soul:*

"*Which long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures;*

"*Which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad, when they can find the grave?*"

And the rabbi, faithful in the performance of his duty, went on to expound and explain. But his hearers could not tarry much longer. The hour was nearing its end, and the machines would soon have to start again.

. . . . .

It is an old story in the Ghetto, one that lovers tell to their sweethearts, who always cry when they hear it. The machines still roar and whirr, as if a legion of wild spirits were shrieking within them, and many a tear is stitched into the garments, but you never see them, madame—no, gaze as intently

upon your jacket as you will, the tear has left no stain. There is an old man at the corner machine, grey-haired and worn, but he works briskly. He is the first to arrive each morning, and the last to leave each night, and all his soul is in his work. His machine is an old one, and roars louder than the rest, but he does not hear it. Day and night, sleeping and waking, there are a hundred thousand machines roaring away in his brain. What cares he for one more or one less?

THE SADER GUEST

THE SADER GUEST

Rosnofsky was explaining to me his theory of the lost blue with which the ancient Hebrew priests dyed the talith, when the door opened and lanky Lazarus entered, hat in hand. He entered cautiously, keeping one hand on the doorknob, and one foot firmly planted for a backward spring. He seemed rather embarrassed to find a third person present, but the matter that he had on his mind was weighty—so weighty, in fact, that, after a moment's hesitation, he plunged right into the heart of it.

"Mr. Rosnofsky," he said, "I love your daughter."

Rosnofsky's eyes opened wide, and his mouth shut tight.

"And she loves me," Lazarus went on.

Rosnofsky's eyes contracted, until they gleamed through the tiniest kind of a slit between the lids. His hand fumbled behind his back among

a number of tailor's tools that lay on the table.

"And I have come to ask your consent to our marriage."

Crash! Rosnofsky's aim was bad. The shears, instead of reaching Lazarus, shattered the window pane. Lazarus was flying rapidly down the street. Then Rosnofsky turned to me.

"And this mixture, as I was saying, will produce exactly the same blue that the Talmud describes."

It was worth while to become acquainted with Rosnofsky. When aroused, or crossed, or seriously annoyed, he had a frightful temper, and the man whose misfortune it had been to stir him up was the object of a malediction as bitter as it was fierce, extending through all his family for, usually, a dozen generations. Then, in startling contrast to this, he was a devout son of Abraham, and, in moments of serious reflection, would be almost overcome by a feeling of piety, and at such times all that was good and noble in his nature asserted itself. It was a strange blending of the prosaic with the patriarchal.

"How came the original colour to be lost?" I asked. Rosnofsky looked at me for a moment. Then he shook his head.

"That scamp has upset me completely," he said. "Some other time I will tell you. Just now I can think of nothing but the effrontery of that scoundrel."

"What makes you so bitter toward him?" I ventured to ask.

"Bitter! Bitter! He wants to marry Miriam. The audacity of the wretch! My only child. And here he practically tells me to my face that he has been making love to her, and that he has ascertained that she is in love with him. And I never knew it. Never even suspected it. A curse on the scamp! Sneaking into my home to steal my daughter from me. The dishonourable villain! I trusted him. The viper. May he suffer a million torments! May the fiends possess him!"

I ventured to suggest that it was the way of the world. I departed. Somewhat hastily. I did not like the way he glared at me.

The next time I saw Rosnofsky he was walking excitedly up and down his shop, tearing his hair

en route. When he saw me he sprang forward and clutched me by the shoulder.

"Here!" he cried. "I will leave it to you. You were here when he had the audacity to confess his guilt to my face. Read this." He thrust a crumpled piece of paper into my hand. "Read it, and tell me if there is another such villain upon this earth. Oh, I shall go mad!"

I read it. It was from Lazarus.

"I told you that I loved your daughter," he wrote. "I told you that she loved me. And, like an honest man, I asked you to consent to our marriage. You refused. I now appeal to you again. You will make us both very happy by giving your consent, as we would like you to be present at the wedding. If you do not give your consent, we will not invite you. But we will get married, anyway. We will elope at the first opportunity. The only way to stop it is to keep Miriam locked in the house. Then I shall call in the police."

It was signed, "Lovingly, your son-in-law-to-be."

"How can I punish him?" asked Rosnofsky. I promised to think it over. I had called merely to

tell Rosnofsky that I would accept his invitation to supper on Sader night, and to thank him.

"You know the law," he said. "When you come bring with you a plan to punish this scoundrel."

. . . . .

It was the eve of the Passover, and I stood in the gloomy hallway tapping at Rosnofsky's door. Dimly through the darkness I saw a quivering shadow, but in the labyrinths of tenement corridors it is unwise to investigate shadows. The door opened, and Rosnofsky, with "praying cap" upon his head, welcomed me to the feast of the Sader.

Miriam was as sweet as a rose. I have not told you how pretty she was, nor shall I begin now, for it is a very tempting subject, such as would be likely to beguile a man into forgetting the thread of his story, and it was too dangerous for me to enter upon. Suffice it that her eyes were as glorious as—but there!

The table was arranged for four, Rosnofsky, Miriam, and myself, and opposite Miriam's seat was the chair for the Stranger.

Now the custom of celebrating this feast, according to the ritual, is like this:

Holding aloft the unleavened bread, the head of the house must say:

"This is the bread of affliction which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. Let all those who are hungry enter and eat thereof; and all who are in distress come and celebrate the Passover."

And the youngest-born must arise and open the door so that the Stranger may enter and take his place at the table, and, even though he slew one of their kin, that night he is a sacred guest.

And—as you have no doubt already opined—hardly had Miriam opened the door when, with pale face, but with lips that were pressed in grim determination, in walked Lazarus. Now, to this day I do not know whether Miriam expected him, or what her feelings were when he entered. She has refused to tell me. It needed but one glance to assure me that if there was any secret Rosnofsky had not been in it.

With a cry of rage he sprang to his feet, and I feared that he would hurl a knife at the intruder.

But an instant later he recovered himself, and with a gurgling, choking sound sank into his chair.

"The grace of God be with you all," saluted Lazarus, still very pale. Then,

"Am I a welcome guest?"

Rosnofsky seemed to be on the point of exploding with rage, but at this question he started as if he had been struck. After a moment's silence he arose with great dignity—and holding out his hand—the strength of his piety never more forcibly illustrated—said:

"Forgive my anger, my son. You are welcome to the Feast of the Passover."

And resuming his seat he chanted:

"Blessed art Thou, O Eternal, our God, King of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of wine!"

It was the beginning of the service. Lazarus, with his eyes upon the table, chanted the responses, and I, who knew nothing of the ritual, looked at Miriam, who, I assure you, was delightful to behold, particularly when her eyes twinkled as they did now.

By the time he had finished the Sader, Rosnofsky's troubled spirit had become soothed, and the

final grace was delivered in a voice so calm and with a manner so soothing, that when he looked up Lazarus was emboldened to speak.

"You are angry with me, Father Rosnofsky," he ventured.

"Let us not speak of unpleasant things this night," replied the tailor, gently. "This is a holy night."

Lazarus, in no way abashed, deftly led the old man to expound some of the intricate sayings of the rabbis upon the Passover, which Rosnofsky, who was something of a theologian, did with great eagerness. Now, how it came about I cannot tell, but Lazarus was so greatly interested in this discussion, and Rosnofsky was so determined to prove that the old rabbis were all in the wrong on this one point, that when the meal was over he declared that if Lazarus would call the next night he would have a book that would convince him. Lazarus had the discretion to take his departure. When he had gone Rosnofsky puffed his pipe in silence for some moments. Then, with a quaint smile, he turned to me and said:

"The young rogue!"

And then he gazed at Miriam until she grew red.

A RIFT IN THE CLOUD

A RIFT IN THE CLOUD

Though the sky be grey and dreary, yet will the faintest rift reveal a vision of the dazzling brightness that lies beyond.
So does a word, a look, a single act of a human being often reveal the glorious beauty of a soul.

So is it written in the Talmud, and it needs no rabbi to expound it. What I am about to tell you is not a rounded tale; it hardly rises to the dignity of a sketch. There is a man who lives in the very heart of a big city, and I once had a peep into his heart. His name is Polatschek. He makes cigars during the day and gets drunk every night.

In that Hungarian colony which clusters around East Houston Street, the lines that separate Gentile, Jew, and Gipsy are not more strictly drawn than are the lines between the lines. And as the pedigree of every member is the common property of the colony, the social status of each group is pretty clearly defined.

Being an outcast, Polatschek has no social status whatever, and all that the colony has ever known or has ever cared to know about him is this:

By a curious atavistic freak Polatschek was born honest. In the little town in southern Hungary from which he came his great-grandfather had been a highwayman, his grandfather had been executed for murder, his father was serving a long sentence for burglary, and his two younger brothers were on the black list of the police. And so, when it was announced that one of the Polatscheks was coming to New York, Houston Street society drew in its latch-string, and one of the storekeepers even went so far as to tell the story to a police detective. This, however, was frowned upon, for Goulash Avenue—as the Hungarians laughingly call Houston Street—loves to keep its secrets to itself.

There is no need to describe the appearance of Polatschek; it is extremely uninteresting. He has a weak chin, and when he is sober he is very timid. A Hungarian does not easily make friends outside his own people, and so it came to pass that Polatschek had no friends at all.

How Polatschek lived none but himself knew. Somewhere in Rivington Street he had a room where, it was once said, he kept books, though no one knew what kind of books they were. For a few hours every day he worked at cigarmaking, earning just enough money to keep body and soul together. He was, in short, as uninteresting a man as you could find, and all who knew him shunned him. Night after night he would sit in Natzi's café, where the gipsies play on Thursdays, drinking slivovitz—which is the last stage. He would drink, drink, drink, and never a word to a soul. On music nights he would drink more than usual and his eyes would fill with tears. We all used to think they were maudlin tears, but we had grown accustomed to Polatschek and his strange habits, and nobody paid attention to him.

. . . . .

It was music night at Natzi's, and Polatschek was sitting close to the gipsies with his eyes fixed upon the leader. He had been drinking a little more than usual, and I marvelled that a man in his maudlin condition should take such a deep interest in music.

They were playing the " Rakoczy March," which only the Hungarians know how to play, and Polatschek was swaying his head in time to the melody.

It seemed so strange, this friendless, hopeless man's love for music, so thoroughly foreign to his dreary, barren nature as I had pictured it in my mind, that when the gipsies had finished I spoke to him.

" That was beautiful, was it not? "

He looked at me in surprise, his eyes wide open, and after gazing at me for a moment he shook his head.

" No, that was not beautiful. The ' Rakoczy March ' is the greatest march in the world, but these gipsies do not know how to play it. They cannot play. They have no life, no soul. They play it as if they were machines."

Startled by his vehemence, I could only murmur, " Oh! "

" Look! " he exclaimed, rising in agitation. He took up the leader's violin and bow. " Listen! This is the ' Rakoczy '! "

The gipsy leader had sprung to his feet, but

at the first tone of the violin he stood as if petrified. A silence had fallen upon the room. With his eyes fixed upon mine, his lips pressed firmly together, Polatschek played the "Rakoczy March." The guests were staring at him in blank amazement. The gipsies, with sparkling eyes, were listening to those magic strains, but Polatschek was unmindful of it all, and—I felt proud because he was playing that march for me. I have heard Sarasate play the "Rakoczy March." I have heard Mme. Urso try it, and I have heard Remenyi, who, being a Hungarian, played it best of them all. But I had never heard it played as Polatschek played it.

As I saw the lines in that face grow sharper, saw the body quiver with patriotic ardour, those ringing, rhythmic tones sang of the tramp, tramp, tramp of armies, of cavalcades of horses, of the clash and clangour of battle. Then it all grew fainter and fainter as if the armies were vanishing in the distance, and the sad strains of the undersong rose to the surface of the melody and I heard that sobbing appeal which lies hidden somewhere in every Hungarian song. It died away, there was a mo-

ment's silence—Polatschek remained standing, looking at me—then a mighty shout went up.

"Ujra! Ujra!" they cried. It was an encore they wanted.

But Polatschek had resumed his seat and his slivovitz, and in a few moments he was very drunk.

OUT OF HIS ORBIT

OUT OF HIS ORBIT

In order to emphasise the moral of a tale, it is safer to state it at the very beginning. The moral of the story of Rosenstein is this: Woe be to the man who attempts to teach his wife a lesson! Woe be to him if he fail! Woe be to him if he succeed! Whatever happens, woe be to him! In witness whereof this tale is offered.

Mrs. Rosenstein wanted one room papered in red, and Mr. Rosenstein held that the yellow paper that adorned the walls was good enough for another year.

"But," argued his wife, "we have laid by a little money in the past years, and we can easily afford it. And I love red paper on the walls." Rosenstein, by the way, owned a dozen tenement houses, had no children, and led a life of strict economy on perhaps one-fiftieth of his income. Besides, Rosenstein owned a lucrative little dry-goods store that brought in more money. And he had never

smoked and had never drunk. But the more his wife insisted upon the red paper the more stubborn he became in his opposition, until, one morning after a heated discussion in which he had failed disastrously to bring forth any reasonable argument to support his side of the case, he suddenly and viciously yielded.

"Very well," he said, putting on his hat and starting for the door; "get your red paper. Have your own way. But from this moment forth I become a drinker."

Mrs. Rosenstein turned pale. "Husband! Husband!" she cried entreatingly, turning toward him with clasped hands. But Rosenstein, without another word, strode out of the room and slammed the door behind him. Mrs. Rosenstein sank into a chair, appalled. The pride of her life had been that her husband had never touched liquor, and the one disquieting thought that from time to time came to worry her was that some day he might fall. And she felt that the first fall would mark the beginning of ruin. She had known men whose habits of drink had undermined their business capacity. Her husband, she knew, was close, and

had a mania for accumulating money. But once the demon of drink entered into his life she felt that all this would change. He would become a spendthrift. He would squander all that he had saved. They would be homeless—perhaps they would starve. And he was about to take the first step. Her heart was almost broken. To follow him she knew would be worse than useless. He was stubborn—she had learned that—and there was nothing for her to do but to accept the inevitable.

Rosenstein meanwhile walked to the nearest saloon. He had passed the place a thousand times, but had never entered before. The bartender's eyes opened in mild surprise to see so patriarchal a figure standing in front of the bar glaring at him so determinedly.

"Give me a drink!" demanded Rosenstein.

"What kind of a drink do you want?" asked the bartender.

Rosenstein looked bewildered. He did not know one drink from another. He looked at the row of bottles behind the counter, and then his face lit up.

"That bottle over there—the big black one."

It was Benedictine. The bartender poured some of it into a tiny liqueur glass, but Rosenstein frowned.

"I want a drink, I said, not a drop. Fill me a big glass."

The wise bartender does not dispute with his patrons as long as they have the means of paying for what they order. Without a word he filled a small goblet with the thick cordial, and Rosenstein, without a word, gulped it down. The bartender watched him in open-mouthed amazement, charged him for four drinks, and then, as Rosenstein walked haughtily out of the place, murmured to himself: "Well, I'll be hanged!"

Rosenstein walked aimlessly but joyfully down the street, bowing to right and to left at the many people who smiled upon him in so friendly a fashion. When he came to the corner he was surprised to see that the whole character of the street had changed over night. Then it seemed to him that a regiment of soldiers came marching up, each man holding out a flowing bowl to him, that he fell into line and joined the march, and that

they all found themselves in a brilliant, dazzling glare of several hundred suns. Then they shot him from the mouth of a cannon, and when he regained consciousness he recognised the features of Mrs. Rosenstein and felt the grateful coolness of the wet towels she was tenderly laying upon his fevered head. It was nearly midnight.

Rosenstein groaned in anguish.

"What has happened?" he asked.

"You have been a drinker," his wife replied, "but it is all over now. Take a nice long sleep and we will never speak of it again. And the yellow paper will do for another year."

Rosenstein watched the flaming pinwheels and skyrockets that were shooting before his vision for a while; then a horrible idea came to him.

"See how much money I have in my pockets," he said. His wife counted it.

"One dollar and forty cents," she said. A sigh of relief rose from Rosenstein's lips.

"It's all right, then. I only had two dollars when I went out." Then he fell peacefully asleep. The next morning he faced his wife and pointed out to her the awful lesson he had taught her.

"You now see what your stubbornness can drive me to," he said. "I have squandered sixty cents and lost a whole day's work in the store merely to convince you that it is all nonsense to put red paper on the walls." But his wife was clinging to him and crying and vowing that she would never again insist upon anything that would add to their expenses. And then they kissed and made up, and Rosenstein went to his store, somewhat weak in the legs and somewhat dizzy, and with a queer feeling in his head, but elated that he had won a complete mastery over his stubborn spouse so cheaply.

The store was closed.

Rosenstein gazed blankly at the barred door and windows. It was the bookkeeper's duty to arrive at eight o'clock and open the store. It was now nine o'clock. Where was the bookkeeper? And where were the three saleswomen? And the office-boy? As quickly as he could, Rosenstein walked to the bookkeeper's house. He found that young man dressing himself and whistling cheerfully. The bookkeeper looked amazed when he beheld his employer.

"What is the meaning of this?" demanded Rosenstein. "Why are you not at the store? Where are the keys?"

The young man's face fell. He looked at Rosenstein curiously. Then, "Were you only joking?" he asked.

"Joking?" repeated Rosenstein, more amazed than ever. "Me? How? When? Are you crazy?"

"You told us all yesterday to close the store and go and have a good time, and that we needn't come back for a week."

Rosenstein steadied himself against the door. He tried to speak, but something was choking him. Finally, pointing to his breast, he managed to gasp faintly:

"Me?"

The clerk nodded.

"And what else did I do?" asked Rosenstein, timidly.

"You gave us each five dollars and—and asked us to sing something and—what is it, Mr. Rosenstein. Are you ill?"

"Go—go!" gasped Rosenstein. "Get every-

body and open the store again. Quickly. And tell them all not to speak of what happened yesterday. They—they—can—they can (gulp) keep the money. But the store must be opened and nobody must tell."

He staggered out into the street. A policeman saw him clutching a lamp-post to steady himself.

"Are you sick, Mr. Rosenstein?" he asked. "You look pale. Can't I get you a drink?"

Rosenstein recoiled in horror. "I am not a drinker!" he cried. Then he walked off, his head in a whirl, his heart sick with a sudden dread. He took a long walk, and when he felt that he had regained control of himself he returned to the store. It was open, and everything was going on as usual. And there was a man—a stranger—waiting for him. When he beheld Rosenstein the stranger's face lit up.

"Good-morning!" he cried, cheerfully. "Sorry to trouble you so early, but this is rent day, and I need the money."

Rosenstein turned pale. The saleswomen had turned their heads away with a discretion that was

painfully apparent. Rosenstein's eyes blinked rapidly several times. Then he said, huskily, "What money?"

The stranger looked at him in surprise.

"Don't you remember this?" he asked, holding out a card. Rosenstein looked at him.

"Yes, this is my card. But what of it?"

"Look on the other side." Rosenstein looked. Staring him in the face was: "I owe Mister Casey thirty-six dollars. I. Rosenstein." The writing was undeniably his. And suddenly there came to him a dim, distant, dreamlike recollection of standing upon a mountain-top with a band of music playing around him and a Mr. Casey handing him some money.

"I thought that was an old dream," he muttered to himself. Then, turning to the stranger, he asked, "Who are you?"

"Me?" said the stranger, in surprise; "why, I'm Casey—T. Casey, of Casey's café. You told me to come as soon as I needed the——"

"Hush!" cried Rosenstein. "Never mind any more." He opened a safe, took out the money, and paid Mr. Casey. When the latter had gone

Rosenstein called the bookkeeper aside, and, in a fearful tone, whispered in his ear:

"Ach! I am so glad when I think that I didn't open the safe yesterday." The bookkeeper looked at him in surprise.

"You tried, sir," he said. "Don't you remember when you said, 'The numbers won't stand still,' and asked me if I couldn't open it? And I told you I didn't know the combination?"

Rosenstein gazed upon him in horror. The room became close. He went out and stood in the doorway, gasping for breath. In the street, directly in front of the store, stood a white horse. A seedy-looking individual stood on the curb holding the halter and gazing expectantly at Rosenstein.

"Good-morning, boss!" he cried, cheerfully.

Rosenstein glared at him. "Go away!" he cried. "I don't allow horses to stand in front of my store. Take him somewhere else."

"I'll take him anywhere ye say, boss," said the man, touching his cap. "But ye haven't paid for him yet."

Rosenstein's heart sank. Then suddenly a wave

of bitter resentment surged through him. He strode determinedly toward the man.

"Did I buy that horse?" he asked, fiercely.

"Sure ye did," answered the man; "for yer milk store."

"But I haven't got a milk store," answered Rosenstein. The man's eyes blinked.

"Don't I know it?" he cried. "Didn't ye tell me so yerself? But didn't ye say ye wuz going to start one? Didn't ye say that this horse was as white as milk, and that if I'd sell him to ye y'd open a milk store? Didn't ye make me take him out of me wagon and run him up and down the street fer ye? Didn't ye make me take all the kids on the block fer a ride? Am I a liar? Huh?"

Rosenstein walked unsteadily into the store and threw his arm around the bookkeeper's neck.

"Get rid of him. For God's sake get him away from here! Give him some money—as little as you can. Only get him away. Some day I will increase your salary. I am sick to-day. I cannot do any business. I am going home." He started for the rear door, but stopped at the threshold.

"Don't take the horse, whatever you do," he said. Then he went home.

Mrs. Rosenstein was sitting on the doorsteps knitting and beaming with joy. When she saw her husband she ran toward him. The tears stood in her eyes.

"Dearest husband! Dear, generous husband! To punish me for my stubbornness and then to fill me with happiness by gratifying the dearest wish of my heart! It is too much! I do not deserve it! One room is all I wanted!"

Rosenstein's heart nearly stopped beating. Upon his ears fell a strange noise of scraping and tearing that came from the doorway of his house.

"Wh-wh-what is it?" he asked, feebly. His wife smiled.

"The paper-hangers are already at work," she said, joyfully. "They said you insisted that all the work should be finished in one day, and they've sent twenty men here."

Mr. Rosenstein sank wearily down upon the steps. The power of speech had left him. Likewise the power of thought. His brain felt like a maelstrom of chaotic, incoherent images. He

felt that he was losing his mind. A brisk-looking young man, with a roll of red wall-paper in his hand, came down the steps and doffed his hat to Rosenstein.

"Good-morning!" he cried, cheerfully. (The salutation "Good-morning" was beginning to go through Rosenstein like a knife each time he heard it.) "I did it. I didn't think I could do it, but I did. I tell you, sir, there isn't another paper-hanger in the city who could fill a job like that at such short notice. Every single room in the house! And red paper, too, which has to be handled so carefully, and makes the work take so much longer. But the job will be finished to-night, sir."

He walked off with the light tread and proud mien of a man who has accomplished something. Rosenstein looked after him bewildered. Then he turned to his wife, but when he saw the smile and the happy look that lit up her face he turned away and sighed. How could he tell her?"

"My love," said Mrs. Rosenstein, after a long pause, "promise me one thing and I will be happy as long as I live."

Rosenstein was silent. In a vague way he was

wondering if this promise was based upon some deed of yesterday that had not yet been revealed to him.

"Promise me," his wife went on, "that, no matter what happens, you will never become a drinker again."

Rosenstein sat bolt upright. He tried to speak. A hundred different words and phrases crowded to his lips, struggling for utterance. He became purple with suppressed excitement. In a wild endeavour to utter that promise so forcibly, so emphatically, and so fiercely as not only to assure his wife, but to relieve his suffering feelings, Rosenstein could only sputter incoherently. Then, suddenly realising the futility of the endeavour, and feeling that his whole vocabulary was inadequate to express the vehemence of his emotion, he gurgled helplessly:

"Yes. I promise."

And he kept the promise.

THE POISONED CHAI

THE POISONED CHAI

Bernstein sat in the furthest corner of the café, brooding. The fiercest torments that plague the human heart were rioting within him, as if they would tear him asunder. Bernstein was of an impulsive, overbearing nature, mature as far as years went, yet with the untrained, inexperienced emotions of a savage. To such natures the " no " from a woman's lips comes like a blow ; the sudden knowledge that those same lips can smile brightly upon another follows like molten lead.

That whole afternoon Bernstein had suffered the wildest tortures of jealousy. Had Natzi been a younger man Bernstein's resentment might not have turned so hotly upon him. Yet Natzi was almost of his own age, a weak-faced creature, with an eternal smile, incapable of intense feeling, ignorant of even the faintest shade of that passion which he (Bernstein) had laid so humbly, so tenderly at her feet—and it was Natzi she loved!

Bernstein's hand darted to his inner pocket and came forth clutching a tiny object upon which he gazed with the look of a fiend.

"I may not have her," he murmured, "but she will never belong to him."

He held the tiny thing in his lap, below the level of the table, so that none other might see it, and looked at it intently. It was a small phial; it contained some colourless liquid.

The thought entered his brain to drain the contents of that phial himself and put an end to the fierce pain that was eating away his heart. Would it not be for the best? There was no one to care. The world held no one but her; perhaps his death would bring the tears to those big brown eyes; she might even come and kiss his cold forehead. But after that Natzi would be master of those kisses, upon Natzi's lips hers would be pressed all the livelong day.

The blood surged to his brain; he clutched the table as though he would squeeze the wood to pulp; before his eyes rose a mist—a red mist—the red of blood. Slowly this mist cleared away, and the face and form of Natzi loomed up

before him—Natzi, with patient, boyish eyes, smiling.

"It is the third time that I've said 'Good-evening.' Have you been sleeping with your eyes open?"

"No. No. Just thinking," said Bernstein, talking rapidly. "Sit down. Here, opposite me. The light hurts my eyes. Come, let us have some chai. Here, waiter! Two chais. Have them hot, with plenty of rum."

"You seem nervous, Bernstein. Aren't you well?" asked Natzi, solicitously.

"Oh, smoking too much. But let us talk about yourself. How is the wood-carving business? Any better?"

Natzi shook his head, ruefully. "Worse," he answered. "They're doing everything by machinery these days, and the machines seem to be improving all the time. The work is all mechanical now. The only real pleasure I get out of my tools is at night when I am home. Then I can carve the things I like—things that don't sell."

The waiter brought two cups of chai, with the blue flames leaping brightly from the burning rum

on the surface. Bernstein's eyes were intent upon the flames.

" I have not yet congratulated you," he said.

He did not see the look that came into Natzi's eyes—a look of tenderness, of earnestness, a look that Bernstein had never seen there, although he had known Natzi many years.

" Yes," said Natzi, thoughtfully. " I am to be congratulated. It is more than I deserve. I am not worthy."

Bernstein's gaze was fastened upon the flames. They were dancing brightly upon the amber liquid.

" She is so beautiful, so sweet, so pure," Natzi went on. " To think that all that happiness is for me! "

The flames changed from blue to red. Bernstein's brain whirled. He felt a wild impulse to throw himself upon his companion and seize him by the throat and strangle him, and cry aloud so that all could hear it: " You shall never have that happiness. She belongs to me. She is part of my life, part of myself. You cannot understand her. I alone of all men understand her. Every thought of my brain, every impulse of my being, every fibre of

my body beats responsive to her. She was made for me. No other shall have her!"

Then the thought of the phial in his hand recurred to his mind and he became calm. The flames died out, and Natzi slowly drained his cup. Bernstein watched him with bloodshot eyes. Looking up he met Natzi's gaze bent upon him anxiously.

"You are not well, Bernstein. Let us go home."

"No, no," Bernstein said, quickly. "It is just nervousness. I have smoked too much." He made a feeble attempt at a smile. "Come," said he, draining his cup. "Let us have another. The last. The very last. And after that we will drink no more chai."

Two more cups were set before them.

"Look," said Bernstein, "is that lightning in the sky?"

Natzi turned his head toward the open doorway. Swiftly, yet stealthily, Bernstein's hand stretched forth until it touched the blue flames that danced on Natzi's cup, hovered there a moment, and then was withdrawn just as Natzi turned around. His fingers had been scorched.

"No, I see no lightning. The stars are shining."

"Let us drink," said Bernstein. "The last drink."

"I am not a fire-eater," said Natzi, smiling. "Let us wait at least until the rum burns out."

Bernstein lowered the flaming cup that, in his eagerness, he had raised toward his lips and looked at Natzi. Malice gleamed in his eyes.

"Yes. Let it cool. Then we will drink a toast."

"With all my heart," said Natzi. "It shall be a toast to her. A toast to the sweetest woman in the world."

There was a long pause. Once or twice Natzi glanced hesitatingly at his companion, who sat with bowed head, his eyes intent upon the flames that leaped so brightly from his cup. Then Natzi spoke, slowly at first, but gradually more rapidly, and more animatedly as the intensity of his emotion mastered him.

"Do you know, dear friend," he began, "there was a time when I thought she loved you? We were together so much, the three of us, and she had so many opportunities to know you—to know you as

I knew you—to know your great, strong mind, your tender heart, your steadfastness, your generous nature, that could harbour no unworthy thought. You pose as a cynic, as a man who looks down upon the petty things that make up life for most of us, but I—I, who have lived with you, struggled with you, known so many of the trials and heart-breakings of everyday life with you—I know you better. True, you have no love for women, and I often wondered how you could be so blind to her sweetness, and to the charm that seemed to fill the room whenever we three were together. But I never took my eyes from her face, and when I saw with what breathless interest she listened whenever you spoke, whenever you told us of your plans for uplifting the down-trodden, of your innermost thoughts and hopes and feelings, I read in her eyes a fondness for you that filled me with despair."

Bernstein was breathing heavily. His lips quivered; his face twitched; the blood had mounted to his cheeks. His eyes were downcast, fastened upon the blue flames of the chai, dancing and leaping in fantastic shapes.

"That time you were sick—do you remember? When the doctor said there was no hope on earth, when everyone felt that the end had come, when you lay for days white and still, hardly breathing, with the pallor of death upon your face—do you remember? And I nursed you—sat at your bedside through four days and four nights without a minute's rest. And then, when the doctor said the crisis had passed and you would get well, I fainted away from sheer weakness—do you remember?"

Perspiration in huge drops was trickling slowly down Bernstein's forehead. His lips were dry. His teeth were tightly clenched.

"And you thought I had done it all for friendship's sake, and I listened to your outpouring of gratitude, taking it all for myself, without a word—without a word! Ah, my dear friend, it was hateful to deceive you; but how could I tell the truth? But now I have no shame in telling it. I did it for her. All for her. To save you for her. That was the only thought in my poor, whirling brain during those long, weary days and nights. I felt that if you died she would die. I knew the intensity of her

nature, and I knew that if aught happened to the man she loved she would die of grief. And now to think you never cared for her, and that it was I whom she always loved!"

Natzi looked at the bowed head before him with tender smile. Bernstein was trembling.

"I am glad, though, that all happened as it did. Had I nursed you only for your own sake, much as I loved you, I might have weakened, my strength might not have held out. For a man can do that for his love which he cannot do for himself. And, perhaps, after all, it was an excellent lesson for me to learn to bear bitter disappointment."

The flames in Bernstein's cup were burning low. With every breath of air they flickered and trembled. They would soon die out.

"Look," said Natzi, reaching into his pocket. "Look at this little piece that I carved during the hours that I sat at your bedside—to keep me awake. I have carried it over my heart ever since."

Bernstein looked up. His eyes were frightfully bloodshot. His face was ashen. In Natzi's hand he beheld a tiny carving in wood, fashioned with

exquisite skill and grace, of a woman's head. The flame in Natzi's cup caught a light gust of air that stirred for a moment, leaped brightly, as if on purpose to illumine the features of the carved image, then flickered and went out. Bernstein had recognised the likeness. Those features were burning in his brain.

" Every night since then I have set this image before me, and I have prayed to God to always keep her as sweet, as pure, and as beautiful as He keeps the flowers in His woods. And every morning I have prayed to Him to fill her life with sunshine and gladness, and to let no sorrow fall upon her. And every day I carried it pressed against my heart and I felt sustained and strengthened. Ah, Bernstein, God is good! He gave her to me! He brought about the revelation that her heart was mine, her sweetness, her beauty—all were mine. Come, comrade, we have gone through many a struggle together. Let us drink a toast—you shall name it! "

Natzi held his cup aloft. With a hoarse cry Bernstein half rose from his seat, swiftly reached forward, and tore the cup from Natzi's grasp.

"To her!" he cried. "To her! May God preserve her and forgive me!"

He drained the cup, stared wildly at the astonished countenance of Natzi, and, after a moment, during which he swayed slightly from side to side, fell forward upon the table, motionless.

URIM AND THUMMIM

URIM AND THUMMIM

The hall was packed to the point of suffocation, with thousands of gaunt, hollow-eyed strikers, who hung upon the speaker's impassioned words with breathless interest. He was an eloquent speaker, with a pale, delicate face, and dark eyes that shone like burning coals.

He had been speaking for an hour, exhorting the strikers to stand firm, and to bear in patience their burden of suffering. When he dwelt on the prospect of victory, and portrayed the ultimate moment of triumph that would be theirs, if only they stood steadfast, a wave of enthusiasm surged through the audience, and they burst into wild cheers.

"Remember, fellow-workmen," he went on, "that we have fought before. Remember that we have suffered before. And remember that we have won before.

"How many are there of you who can look back

to the famous strike of ten years ago? Do you not remember how, for two months, we fought with unbroken ranks, and after privation and distress far beyond what we are passing through to-day, triumphed over our enemies and won a glorious victory? It was but a pittance that we were striking for, but the life of our union was at stake. With one exception, not a man faltered. The story of our sufferings only God remembers! But we bore them without a murmur, without complaint. There was one dastard—one traitor, recreant to his oath—but we triumphed in spite of him. Oh, my fellow-workers, let us——"

But now a mist gathered before my eyes; the sound of his voice died away, and all that assemblage faded from my sight.

The speaker's words had awakened in my mind the memory of Urim and Thummim; all else was instantly forgotten.

. . . . .

Urim was a doll that had lost both legs and an arm, but its cheeks, when I first saw it, were still pink, and, in spite of its misfortunes, it wore a smile that never faded. Thummim was also a doll, some-

what more rugged than Urim, but gloomy and frowning, in spite of its state of preservation. Koppel and Rebecca agreed that Urim was by far the more interesting of the two, but the two had come into the household together, and to discard Thummim was altogether out of the question.

Koppel was a cloakmaker, and it was during the big strike that I first met him. Of all the members of that big trades-union he alone had continued to work when the strike was declared, and they all cursed him. Pleading and threats alike were of no avail to induce him to leave the shop; for the paltry pittance that he could earn he abandoned his union and violated his oath of affiliation.

At every meeting he was denounced, his name was hissed, he was an outcast among his kind.

When I tapped upon his door there was no response. I opened it and beheld a child with raven hair, so busily occupied with undressing a doll that she did not look up until I asked:

"Is Mr. Koppel in?"

She turned with a start and gazed at me in astonishment. Her big, brown eyes were opened wide at the apparition of a stranger, yet she did

not seem at all alarmed. After a moment's hesitation—the door was still open—she approached me and held out the doll.

"Urim!" she said. I took it, and with a happy smile she ran to a corner of the room, where, from under a table, she dragged another doll.

"T'ummim!" she said, holding it out to me.

Then Koppel entered the room. He knew me, although I had never seen him before, and readily guessed the object of my errand.

"You are from the newspaper," he said. "You want to know why I did not strike."

When the lamplight fell upon his countenance I saw that he was a miserable-looking creature, servile in his manner, and repulsive to the eye. He did not appear to be very strong, and the climb of the stairs seemed to have exhausted him. He sat down, and the girl climbed upon his knee. She threw her arm around his neck, and, looking up at me with a pretty smile, said:

"Urim—T'ummim—mine!"

Koppel stroked her head, and a look of deep love came into his eyes, and then I began to understand.

"She has no mother," he said. "I must pay a

woman to give her food. I—I can't strike—can I?"

One of the dolls slipped from my hand and fell to the floor.

"Urim!" cried the little one, slipping hastily from her father's knee to pick it up. Tenderly she examined the doll's head; it was unscathed. Then she looked up at me and held out her arms, and her mouth formed into a rosebud. It was a charming picture, altogether out of place—naïve, picturesque, utterly delightful.

"You must go to bed," said her father, sternly. "The foolish thing wants you to kiss her."

We became friends—Koppel, Rebecca, Urim, Thummim, and I.

"I was reading the Pentateuch aloud one night," explained Koppel, "and she caught the words Urim and Thummim. They pleased her, and she has not forgotten them."

I have not said that Rebecca was pretty. She was more than pretty; there was a light in her baby face that bespoke a glorious womanhood. There was a quiet dignity in her baby manners that can be found only among the children of the Orient.

She was a winsome child, and during the day, when her father was at work, the children from far and near would come to make a pet of her.

The strike was at an end, and Koppel was discharged. When I came to the house a few days later Rebecca was eating a piece of dry bread, saving a few crumbs for Urim and Thummim. Koppel, in gloomy silence, was watching her.

"She is not well," he said. "She has had nothing to eat but bread for three days. I must send her to an institution."

The next morning the doctor was there, prescribing for her in a perfunctory way, for it was merely a charity case. She smiled feebly when she saw me, and handed me a doll that lay beside her.

"It's Thummim," I said. "Won't you give me Urim?"

She shook her head and smiled. She was holding Urim against her breast.

. . . . .

It happened ten years ago, and it seems but yesterday. The day was warm and sultry—almost as close as this crowded hall. The streets of the Ghetto were filled with the market throng, and the

air hummed with the music of life. The whole picture rises clearly, now—as clearly as the platform from which the enthusiastic speaker's voice resounds through the hall.

A white hearse stands before the house. The driver, unaided, bears a tiny coffin out of the gloomy hallway into the bright sunshine. The group of idlers make way for him, and look on with curiosity, as he deposits his burden within the hearse.

There are no carriages. There are no flowers. Koppel walks slowly out of the house, his eyes fastened upon the sidewalk, his lips moving as if he were muttering to himself. In his hand he carries two broken dolls. Without looking to right or left, he climbs beside the driver, and the hearse rattles down the street.

I mounted the stairs to his home, and found everything as it had been when I was there last—everything save Koppel and Rebecca, and Urim and Thummim, and these I never saw again.

A YIDDISH IDYLL

A YIDDISH IDYLL

Die Liebe ist eine alte Geschichte.

In German they call it "Die Liebe." The French, as every school-girl knows, call it "L'Amour." It is known to the Spanish and the Italians, and, unless I am greatly mistaken, it was known even in Ur of the Chaldeans, the city that was lost before the dawn of ancient Greece.

The sky has sung of it, the bright stars have sung of it, the birds and the flowers and the green meadows have sung of it. And far from the brightness and the sunshine of the world I can lead you to a dark room where, night and day, the air is filled with the whirring and buzzing and droning and humming of sewing machines, and if you listen intently you can hear the song they sing: "Love! Love! Love!"

Die Liebe ist eine alte Geschichte.

It is a foolish song, and somehow or other it has become sadly entangled with the story of Erzik and

Sarah, which is a foolish story that has neither beginning nor end. Nor has it a plot or a meaning or anything at all, for that matter, save the melody of spring and the perfume of flowers.

You see, Sarah's eyes were brown and Erzik's were blue, and they sat side by side in the sweat-shop where the sewing machines whirred and buzzed and droned and hummed. And side by side they had sat for almost a year, speaking hardly a dozen words a day, for they are silent people, those Eastern Jews, and each time that Sarah looked up she could see that Erzik's eyes were blue, and she saw a light in them that brought the blood to her cheeks and filled her with a strange joy and a resolve not to look up again.

And Erzik, wondering at the gladness in his heart, would smile, whereat the sweater would frown, and the machines would whirr and buzz and drone and hum more briskly.

It was the fault of the black thread—or was it the white thread? One of them, at least, had become entangled in the bobbin of Sarah's sewing machine, and in disentangling it the needle's point pierced her skin, drawing—a tiny drop of blood.

Erzik turned pale, and tearing a strip from his handkerchief—a piece of extravagance which exasperated the sweater beyond all bounds—hastened to bind it around the wound. Then Sarah laughed, and Erzik laughed, too, and of course he must hold the finger close to his eyes to adjust the bandage, and then, before the whole room, he kissed her hand. Then she slapped him upon one cheek, whereupon he quickly offered the other, and they laughed, and all the room laughed, save Esther, whose face was always white and pinched.

Is it not a foolish story? That very night Erzik told Sarah that he loved her, and she cried and told him she loved him, and then he cried, and they both were happy. And on the next day they told the sweater that they were soon going to be married, which did not interest him at all.

It was gossip for half a day, and then it fell into the natural order of things. The machines went on whirring and buzzing and droning and humming, and Erzik and Sarah frequently looked up from their work and gazed smilingly into each other's eyes. Of this they never tired, and through the spring their love grew stronger and deeper, and

the machines in the room never ceased to sing of it; even the sparrows that perched upon the telegraph wires close by the windows chirped it all day long.

Esther grew whiter and whiter, and her face became more and more pinched. And one day she was not in her place. But neither Erzik nor Sarah missed her. Another day and another, she was absent, and on the following day they buried her. The rabbi brought a letter to Erzik.

"She said it was for your wedding."

Carefully folded in a clean sheet of note paper lay three double eagles; it was Esther's fortune.

Die Liebe ist eine alte Geschichte.

Erzik and Sarah have been married a year, and they still sit side by side in the sweatshop. Spring has come again, and the sewing machines whirr and buzz and drone and hum, and through it all you can hear that foolish old song. When they look up from their work and their eyes meet, they smile. They are content with their lot in life, and they love each other.

The story runs in my head like an old song, and when the sky is blue, and the birds sing, the melody

is sweet beyond all words. Sometimes, when the sky is grey and the air is heavy with a coming storm, it seems as if there is a note of sadness in the song, as if a heart were crying. But the sunshine makes it right again.

THE STORY OF SARAI

THE STORY OF SARAI

It was the idle hour of the mart, and the venders of Hester Street were busy brushing away the flies. Mother Politsky had arranged her patriarchal-looking fish for at least the twentieth time, and was wondering whether it might not be better to take them home than to wait another hour in the hope of a chance customer being attracted to her stand. Suddenly a shadow fell across the fish. She looked up and beheld a figure that looked for all the world as if it had just stepped out of the pages of the Pentateuch. The venerable grey beard, the strong aquiline nose, the grave blue eyes, and, above all, the air of unutterable wisdom, completed a picture of one of Israel's prophets.

"God be with the Herr Rabbi!" greeted Mother Politsky.

The rabbi poked a patriarchal finger into the fish, and grunted in approbation of their firmness.

"Are they fresh?" he asked, giving no heed to her salutation.

"They were swimming in the sea this very day, Herr Rabbi. They could not be fresher if they were alive. And the price is—oh, you'll laugh at me when I tell you—only twelve cents a pound."

The rabbi laughed, displaying fine, wide teeth.

"Come, come, my good mother. Tell me without joking what they cost. This big one, and that little one over there."

"But, Herr Rabbi, you surely cannot mean that that is too much! Well, well—an old friend—eleven cents, we'll say. Will you take the big one or the little one?"

The rabbi was still smiling.

"My dear mother, you remind me of Sarai."

"And who was she?" asked Mother Politsky with interest.

"Sarai was the beautiful daughter of the famous Rabbiner Emanuel ben Achad, who lived many hundreds of years ago. She was famed for her beauty, and likewise for her exceeding shrewdness. Yes, Sarai was very, very clever."

"And I remind you of her? Well, well. What a beautiful thing it is to be a rabbi and know so much about the past! Come, now, I'll say ten cents, and you can have your choice. Shall I wrap up the big——"

"This Sarai," the rabbi went on, "had many lovers, but of them all she liked only two. One of these was the favourite of her father; the other was a poor but handsome youth who was apprenticed to a scribe. For a long time Sarai hesitated between the two. Each was handsome, each was a devoted lover, each was gifted with no ordinary intelligence, and each was brave. Yet she was undecided upon which to bestow her heart and her hand."

The rabbi had picked up the big fish, and now paused to sniff at it.

"And what did she do?" asked Mother Politsky.

"Ten cents?" said the rabbi, and then, with a sigh, he laid down the fish, as if it were hopelessly beyond his reach.

"Nine, then, and take it, but what did Sarai do?"

The rabbi looked long and intently at the fish, and then, shaking his head sadly, resumed his narrative.

"Sarai pondered over the matter for many, many weeks, and finally decided to put them to a test. Now the name of her father's favourite was Ezra, while the poor youth was called Joseph. 'Father,' she said one day, 'what is the most difficult task that a man can be put to?' 'The most difficult thing that I know of,' her father promptly replied, 'is to grasp the real meaning of the Talmud.'

"Thereupon Sarai called Ezra and Joseph before her, and said to them: 'He that brings to me the real meaning of the Talmud shall have my hand.' Was that not clever of her?"

"Yes! Yes! But who brought the true answer?" asked Mother Politsky, with breathless interest. The rabbi was looking longingly at the fish.

"How much did you say?"

"Eight cents, eight cents. I don't want any profit, but who——"

"Neither of the young men," the rabbi went on,

with his eyes still upon the fish, "knew anything about the Talmud, but Joseph, who was well versed in Hebrew, began at once to study it, wherein he had the advantage over Ezra, who knew not a word of Hebrew."

"Poor Ezra!" murmured Mother Politsky.

"But Ezra was a shrewd young man, and, without wasting any time upon studying, he went straight to Sarai's father and said to him: 'Rabbi, you are the greatest scholar of the world to-day. Can you tell me the real meaning of the Talmud?'"

"Poor Joseph!" murmured Mother Politsky.

"'My son,' said Rabbi ben Achad, 'all the wisdom of the human race since the days of Moses has not been able to answer that question!'"

The rabbi had taken up the big fish and the small one, and was carefully balancing them.

"Eight, you say. I know a place where I can get them——"

"Seven, then. And Joseph?"

"——for six."

"Seven is the lowest. But Jo——"

The rabbi turned to move away.

"All right. Six cents. But finish the story. What did Joseph do?"

"Joseph studied many years and came to the same conclusion. I'll take the small one."

"But which of them married Sarai?"

"The story does not say. You're sure it is fresh?"

THE AMERICANISATION OF SHADRACH COHEN

THE AMERICANISATION OF SHADRACH COHEN

THERE is no set rule for the turning of the worm; most worms, however, turn unexpectedly. It was so with Shadrach Cohen.

He had two sons. One was named Abel and the other Gottlieb. They had left Russia five years before their father, had opened a store on Hester Street with the money he had given them. For reasons that only business men would understand they conducted the store in their father's name—and, when the business began to prosper and they saw an opportunity of investing further capital in it to good advantage, they wrote to their dear father to come to this country.

"We have a nice home for you here," they wrote. "We will live happily together."

Shadrach came. With him he brought Marta, the serving-woman who had nursed his wife until

she died, and whom, for his wife's sake, he had taken into the household. When the ship landed he was met by two dapper-looking young men, each of whom wore a flaring necktie with a diamond in it. It took him some time to realise that these were his two sons. Abel and Gottlieb promptly threw their arms around his neck and welcomed him to the new land. Behind his head they looked at each other in dismay. In the course of five years they had forgotten that their father wore a gaberdine—the loose, baglike garment of the Russian Ghetto—and had a long, straggling grey beard and ringlets that came down over his ears—that, in short, he was a perfect type of the immigrant whose appearance they had so frequently ridiculed. Abel and Gottlieb were proud of the fact that they had become Americanised. And they frowned at Marta.

"Come, father," they said. "Let us go to a barber, who will trim your beard and make you look more like an American. Then we will take you home with us."

Shadrach looked from one to the other in surprise.

"My beard?" he said; "what is the matter with my beard?"

"In this city," they explained to him, "no one wears a beard like yours except the newly landed Russian Jews."

Shadrach's lips shut tightly for a moment. Then he said:

"Then I will keep my beard as it is. I am a newly landed Russian Jew." His sons clinched their fists behind their backs and smiled at him amiably. After all, he held the purse-strings. It was best to humour him.

"What shall we do with Marta?" they asked. "We have a servant. We will not need two."

"Marta," said the old man, "stays with us. Let the other servant go. Come, take me home. I am getting hungry."

They took him home, where they had prepared a feast for him. When he bade Marta sit beside him at the table Abel and Gottlieb promptly turned and looked out of the window. They felt that they could not conceal their feelings. The feast was a dismal affair. Shadrach was racking his brains to find some explanation that would account

for the change that had come over his sons. They had never been demonstrative in their affection for him, and he had not looked for an effusive greeting. But he realised immediately that there was a wall between him and his sons; some change had occurred; he was distressed and puzzled. When the meal was over Shadrach donned his praying cap and began to recite the grace after meals. Abel and Gottlieb looked at each other in consternation. Would they have to go through this at every meal? Better—far better—to risk their father's displeasure and acquaint him with the truth at once. When it came to the response Shadrach looked inquiringly at his sons. It was Abel who explained the matter:

"We—er—have grown out of—er—that is—er—done away with—er—sort of fallen into the habit, don't you know, of leaving out the prayer at meals. It's not quite American!"

Shadrach looked from one to the other. Then, bowing his head, he went on with his prayer.

"My sons," he said, when the table had been cleared. "It is wrong to omit the prayer after meals. It is part of your religion. I do not know

anything about this America or its customs. But religion is the worship of Jehovah, who has chosen us as His children on earth, and that same Jehovah rules supreme over America even as He does over the country that you came from."

Gottlieb promptly changed the subject by explaining to him how badly they needed more money in their business. Shadrach listened patiently for a while, then said:

"I am tired after my long journey. I do not understand this business that you are talking about. But you may have whatever money you need. After all, I have no one but you two." He looked at them fondly. Then his glance fell upon the serving-woman, and he added, quickly:

"And Marta."

"Thank God," said Gottlieb, when their father had retired, "he does not intend to be stingy."

"Oh, he is all right," answered Abel. "After he gets used to things he will become Americanised like us."

To their chagrin, however, they began to realise, after a few months, that their father was clinging

to the habits and customs of his old life with a tenacity that filled them with despair. The more they urged him to abandon his ways the more eager he seemed to become to cling to them. He seemed to take no interest in their business affairs, but he responded, almost cheerfully, to all their requests for money. He began to feel that this, after all, was the only bond between him and his sons. And when they had pocketed the money, they would shake their heads and sigh.

"Ah, father, if you would only not insist upon being so old-fashioned!" Abel would say.

"And let us fix you up a bit," Gottlieb would chime in.

"And become more progressive—like the other men of your age in this country."

"And wear your beard shorter and trimmed differently."

"And learn to speak English."

Shadrach never lost his temper; never upbraided them. He would look from one to the other and keep his lips tightly pressed together. And when they had gone he would look at Marta and would say:

"Tell me what you think, Marta. Tell me what you think."

"It is not proper for me to interfere between father and sons," Marta would say. And Shadrach could never induce her to tell him what she thought. But he could perceive a gleam in her eyes and observed a certain nervous vigour in the way she cleaned the pots and pans for hours after these talks, that fell soothingly upon his perturbed spirit.

. . . . .

As we remarked before, there is no rule for the turning of the worm. Some worms, however, turn with a crash. It was so with Shadrach Cohen.

Gottlieb informed his father that he contemplated getting married.

"She is very beautiful," he said. "The affair is all in the hands of the Shadchen."

His father's face lit up with pleasure.

"Gottlieb," he said, holding out his hand, "God bless you! It's the very best thing you could do. Marta, bring me my hat and coat. Come, Gottlieb. Take me to see her. I cannot wait a moment. I want to see my future daughter-in-law at once.

How happy your mother would be if she were alive to-day!"

Gottlieb turned red and hung back.

"I think, father," he said, "you had better not go just yet. Let us wait a few days until the Shadchen has made all the arrangements. She is an American girl. She—she won't—er—understand your ways—don't you know? And it may spoil everything."

Crash! Marta had dropped an iron pot that she was cleaning. Shadrach was red in the face with suppressed rage.

"So!" he said. "It has come to this. You are ashamed of your father!" Then he turned to the old servant:

"Marta," he said, "to-morrow we become Americanised—you and I."

There was an intonation in his voice that alarmed his son.

"You are not angry——" he began, but with a fierce gesture his father cut him short.

"Not another word. To bed! Go to bed at once."

Gottlieb was dumbfounded. With open mouth

he stared at his father. He had not heard that tone since he was a little boy.

"But, father——" he began.

"Not a word. Do you hear me? Not a word will I listen to. In five minutes if you are not in bed you go out of this house. Remember, this is my house."

Then he turned to Abel. Abel was calmly smoking a cigar.

"Throw that cigar away," his father commanded, sternly.

Abel gasped and looked at his father in dismay.

"Marta, take that cigar out of his mouth and throw it into the fire. If he objects he goes out of the house."

With a smile of intense delight Marta plucked the cigar from Abel's unresisting lips, and incidentally trod heavily upon his toes. Shadrach gazed long and earnestly at his sons.

"To-morrow, my sons," he said, slowly, "you will begin to lead a new life."

In the morning Abel and Gottlieb, full of dread forebodings, left the house as hastily as they could. They wanted to get to the store to talk matters

over. They had hardly entered the place, however, when the figure of their father loomed up in the doorway. He had never been in the place before. He looked around him with great satisfaction at the many evidences of prosperity which the place presented. When he beheld the name "Shadrach Cohen, Proprietor" over the door he chuckled. Ere his sons had recovered from the shock of his appearance a pale-faced clerk, smoking a cigarette, approached Shadrach, and in a sharp tone asked:

"Well, sir, what do you want?" Shadrach looked at him with considerable curiosity. Was he Americanised, too? The young man frowned impatiently.

"Come, come! I can't stand here all day. Do you want anything?"

Shadrach smiled and turned to his sons.

"Send him away at once. I don't want that kind of young man in my place." Then turning to the young man, upon whom the light of revelation had quickly dawned, he said, sternly:

"Young man, whenever you address a person who is older than you, do it respectfully. Honour

your father and your mother. Now go away as fast as you can. I don't like you."

"But, father," interposed Gottlieb, "we must have someone to do his work."

"Dear me," said Shadrach, "is that so? Then, for the present, you will do it. And that young man over there—what does he do?"

"He is also a salesman."

"Let him go. Abel will take his place."

"But, father, who is to manage the store? Who will see that the work is properly done?"

"I will," said the father. "Now, let us have no more talking. Get to work."

Crestfallen, miserable, and crushed in spirit, Abel and Gottlieb began their humble work while their father entered upon the task of familiarising himself with the details of the business. And even before the day's work was done he came to his sons with a frown of intense disgust.

"Bah!" he exclaimed. "It is just as I expected. You have both been making as complete a mess of this business as you could without ruining it. What you both lack is sense. If becoming Americanised means becoming stupid, I must

congratulate you upon the thoroughness of your work. To-morrow I shall hire a manager to run this store. He will arrange your hours of work. He will also pay you what you are worth. Not a cent more. How late have you been keeping this store open?"

"Until six o'clock," said Abel.

"H'm! Well, beginning to-day, you both will stay here until eight o'clock. Then one of you can go. The other will stay until ten. You can take turns. I will have Marta send you some supper."

. . . . .

To the amazement of Abel and Gottlieb the business of Shadrach Cohen began to grow. Slowly it dawned upon them that in the mercantile realm they were as children compared with their father. His was the true money-maker spirit; there was something wonderful in the swiftness with which he grasped the most intricate phases of trade; and where experience failed him some instinct seemed to guide him aright. And gradually, as the business of Shadrach Cohen increased, and even the sons saw vistas of prosperity beyond their wildest

dreams, they began to look upon their father with increasing respect. What they had refused to the integrity of his character, to the nobility of his heart, they promptly yielded to the shrewdness of his brain. The sons of Shadrach Cohen became proud of their father. He, too, was slowly undergoing a change. A new life was unfolding itself before his eyes, he became broader-minded, more tolerant, and, above all, more flexible in his tenets. Contact with the outer world had quickly impressed him with the vast differences between his present surroundings and his old life in Russia. The charm of American life, of liberty, of democracy, appealed to him strongly. As the field of his business operations widened he came more and more in contact with American business men, from whom he learned many things—principally the faculty of adaptibility. And as his sons began to perceive that all these business men whom, in former days, they had looked upon with feelings akin to reverence, seemed to show to their father an amount of deference and respect which they had never evinced toward the sons, their admiration for their father increased.

And yet it was the same Shadrach Cohen.

From that explosive moment when he had rebelled against his sons he demanded from them implicit obedience and profound respect. Upon that point he was stern and unyielding. Moreover, he insisted upon a strict observance of every tenet of their religion. This, at first, was the bitterest pill of all. But they soon became accustomed to it. When life is light and free from care, religion is quick to fly; but when the sky grows dark and life becomes earnest, and we feel its burden growing heavy upon our shoulders, then we welcome the consolation that religion brings, and we cling to it. And Shadrach Cohen had taught his sons that life was earnest. They were earning their bread by the sweat of their brow. No prisoner, with chain and ball, was subjected to closer supervision by his keeper than were Gottlieb and Abel.

"You have been living upon my charity," their father said to them: "I will teach you how to earn your own living."

And he taught them. And with the lesson they learned many things; learned the value of dis-

cipline, learned the beauty of filial reverence, learned the severe joy of the earnest life.

One day Gottlieb said to his father:

"May I bring Miriam to supper to-night? I am anxious that you should see her."

Shadrach turned his face away so that Gottlieb might not see the joy that beamed in his eyes.

"Yes, my son," he answered. "I, too, am anxious to see if she is worthy of you."

Miriam came, and in a stiff, embarrassed manner Gottlieb presented her to his father. The girl looked in surprise at the venerable figure that stood before her—a picture of a patriarch from the Pentateuch, with a long, straggling beard, and ringlets of hair falling over the ears, and clad in the long gaberdine of the Russian Ghettos. And she saw a pair of grey eyes bent keenly upon her—eyes of shrewdness, but soft and tender as a woman's—the eyes of a strong man with a kind heart. Impulsively she ran toward him and seized his hands. And, with a smile upon her lips, she said:

"Will you not give me your blessing?"

. . . . .

When the evening meal had ended, Shadrach

donned his praying cap, and with bowed head intoned the grace after meals:

"We will bless Him from whose wealth we have eaten!" And in fervent tones rose from Gottlieb's lips the response:

"Blessed be He!"

HANNUKAH LIGHTS

HANNUKAH LIGHTS

SOMEWHERE in transit he had lost all his letters, papers, credentials, cards—all belongings, in fact, that might have established his identity. He said he was David Parnes, and that he had come from Pesth. And, as he was tall and straight, with fine black eyes and curling black hair, a somewhat dashing presence, and the most charming manners, he soon made friends, particularly among the women, for, in Houston Street, as elsewhere, the fair sex rarely looks behind a pleasing personality for credentials of character.

Eulie, the waitress and maid-of-all-work in Weiss's coffee house, felt the blood surge to her face when first she beheld him, and when, for the first time, he gave her *Trinkgeld* and a smile, all the blood rushed back to her heart. After that Eulie was his slave. All day long she waited for him to come. When he had gone the place seemed dark, and the music of the gipsy band grated upon

her. While he was there—usually sitting alone and sipping coffee and staring into vacancy like a man whose mind is busy with many schemes—her heart beat faster, and life seemed glad. Eulie was plain—painfully plain—but there was a charm about her that had won the admiration of many of the patrons of the place, some of whom had even offered her marriage. But she had only laughed, and had declared that she would never marry.

Sometimes these incidents came to the ear of Esther, the daughter of the proprietor, and made her heart burn; for Esther was fair to look upon, and yet had reached and passed her twentieth year without a single offer of marriage. With all her beauty the girl was absolutely devoid of charm; there was something even in the tone of her voice that repelled men; probably a reflection of her arrogance and selfishness. Then, one day, Eulie beheld her talking to David; saw that her face was animated, and that David's eyes were fastened intently upon her. In Esther's eyes she read that story which, between woman and woman, is an open book. When her work was finished that night Eulie

hastened to her room, and, throwing herself upon the bed, burst into a flood of weeping.

The affair progressed rapidly. There were times when Eulie, after serving him with coffee, would stand silently behind David, gazing upon him intently, yearning to throw her arms around that curly head and cry, "I love you! I am your slave!" But these became rarer and rarer, for Esther demanded more and more of his presence, and it was seldom that he sat alone in the coffee house. Eulie had never seen him manifest any of those lover-like demonstrations toward Esther that might have been expected under the circumstances, but she attributed this to his pride. Probably, she thought, when they were alone, beyond the reach of prying eyes, he kissed her and caressed her to her heart's content. The thought of it wore on her spirit. And when, one day, Esther told her that they were to be married at the end of a month Eulie turned pale and trembled, and then hurried to her room.

A few days after this announcement had been publicly made, and congratulations had begun to pour in from the many patrons of the establish-

ment, who had known Esther from childhood, Eulie observed a change in David's demeanour. He seemed suddenly to have become worried. He would come to the coffee house late at night, after Esther had retired, and sit alone over his coffee, brooding. Eulie's duties permitted her to leave at nine o'clock, but if David had not come at that hour, she continued to work, even until midnight, the closing time, in the hope that she would see him enter. He rarely spoke to her, rarely noticed her, in fact, but Eulie, in her heart, had established an intimacy between them. An intimacy? Rather a world of love and devotion, in which, alas! she lived alone with a shadow.

She was quick to see the change that had come over him, and she longed to speak to him—to implore him to confide in her. Was it money? She had led a frugal life, and had saved the greater part of her earnings for years. She would not trust her pittance to the banks. It was all in a trunk in her room, and he was welcome to it. Was it service that he needed? She was a slave ready to do his bidding. The tears came into her eyes to see that face upon which light and laughter sat

so gracefully now cast down with gloom. But David worried on in silence, and left the place without a word.

Then, for several days, he did not come at all. Esther told her that he had been called out of town on business.

"Did—did he not look worried when last you saw him?" Eulie asked, timidly. Esther's eyes opened in surprise.

"Why, no. I did not notice that he looked any different."

Eulie sighed. That night there came to one of her tables a brisk, sharp-eyed little man, whose manner and accent betokened a new arrival from Hungary. He bowed politely to Eulie, praised her skill in waiting upon him, and complimented her upon her hair, which she wore flat upon her head after the fashion of the peasant girls of Hungary. He gave her liberal *Trinkgeld,* and bowed courteously when he departed. The next evening he returned and greeted her as a newly made acquaintance. They chatted pleasantly a while—he had much news from the mother country that interested her—and then, quite by-the-way—Did she happen

to know a young man, tall and straight—quite good-looking, black eyes and curling hair, a very pleasant chap, extremely popular with the girls? A friend had told him that he would find this young man somewhere in the Hungarian colony—did she know anyone who answered that description? His eyes were turned from her—he was watching the gipsies playing—it was all quite casual.

It is said that love creates a sixth sense. In a flash Eulie's whole nature shrank from this man, and stood at arms ready for battle. This was no friend in search of a boon companion. This was an enemy—a mortal enemy of David. She felt it, knew it as positively as if she had seen him fly at David's throat. Fortunately the man had not observed the pallor that overspread her countenance.

"No. I do not remember having seen such a man. He never comes here, or I would have remembered him."

That night was the beginning of the feast of Hanukkah—the only feast at which the penitential psalms are omitted, lest they might mar the joyfulness of the celebration. Esther was away, and it was Eulie's duty to light the candles in the

living room overhead. The sun was fast sinking, but the light of day still lingered in the sky. Eulie felt that it might be sacrilegious to hasten so holy a function, but a sudden nervous dread had come over her, and there was fear in her heart.

"I will light the candles now," she said. "Then I will wait outside in the street, and if he comes I will warn him."

Swiftly, lightly, she sped up the stairs to the living room. The door was open, and the light from the hall lamp shone dimly into the furthest corner, where, with his back turned to the door, stood, or rather knelt, David Parnes before a desk in which the coffee house proprietor kept his money. Eulie recoiled, shocked, horrified. Then, swift as a lightning stroke came full revelation. He was a thief! She had always suspected something like that. And she loved him—adored him more than ever at this moment! Eulie was an honest girl, an honest peasant girl, descended from a long line of peasants, all as honest as the day. But the world was against the man she loved. Honesty? To the winds with honesty! With a rush she was at his side.

"Listen!" she whispered, excitedly. "There is the key. Over there on the wall. The money is in the top drawer. Take it and fly. There is a man below from Hungary looking for you. I told him you did not come here. You can get away before he finds you. I will never tell. I swear I will never tell. Quick! You must fly!"

The young man had turned quickly when she entered, but after that he had not moved. He was still upon one knee. Had a thunderbolt fallen from the ceiling he could not have been more astonished. He looked at Eulie in bewilderment.

"Wait!" she cried. "I will be back in a second. Open the desk and take all the money, and then I will be back."

It seemed to him but an instant—Eulie had gone and had returned. He was still kneeling—almost petrified with amazement. Eulie held out an old, stained, leather pocketbook.

"It is all mine," she whispered. "Take it. Run! You must not wait!"

Slowly he rose to his feet. Once or twice he passed his hand over his eyes as if he feared he was dreaming.

"Eulie?"

There was a world of incredulity, of bewilderment, of questioning in his voice.

"Oh, do not stay!" cried the poor girl. "They will be looking for you. Go, before it is too late. Go far away. They will never find you."

"I do not understand," he said, slowly. "What does it mean?"

A sudden weakness overcame Eulie, and she burst into tears. He advanced toward her.

"Why are you doing this?" he asked. Eulie could not speak. Her frame was convulsed with sobbing; the tears were streaming down her cheeks; David, open-mouthed, stood gazing at her. The pocketbook had fallen from her hand, and a small heap of bank notes had slipped from it. David looked at them; then at her. Slowly he advanced to where she stood. As gently as he could he drew her hands from her face and turned her head toward the light in the hall.

"Eulie?"

The blood coursed to her cheeks. Her gaze fell. She tore herself from his clasp.

"For God's sake, go!" she cried. He restored

the money to the pocketbook and placed it in her hands. Then he started toward the door.

"You will not take it?" she asked, piteously. "It is all mine. I give it to you freely. Borrow it if you like. Some day you can send it back."

He shook his head, stood irresolute for a moment, then returned to her.

"Eulie," he whispered. "My mother is dead. But in heaven she is blessing you!"

Then he kissed her upon the forehead and walked determinedly out of the room. Eulie stood swaying to and fro, for a moment, then tottered and fell to the floor. David stood on the stairs a full minute, breathing heavily, like a man who has been running. Then his teeth clicked tightly together, he drew a long breath, walked briskly down the steps, and strode into the brilliantly lighted coffee house.

He knew the man at once. He had never seen him before, but unerring instinct pointed out his pursuer. He walked straight toward him.

"When do we start for Pesth?" he asked.

The man eyed him narrowly, gazed at him thoughtfully for a moment, then his face lit up.

"By the next steamer, if you like," was all he said.

David nodded.

"Good," he said. Then, after a moment's hesitation:

"Will you come upstairs with me for a moment?"

Without a word the man accompanied him. They found Eulie, pale as a ghost, standing at the mantel, lighting the Hannukah candles. When she beheld David with his captor, she screamed, and would have fallen had not David sprung forward and caught her in his arms.

"Listen," he said, speaking rapidly. "I am going back. My name is not David Parnes. I will write in a few days and tell you everything. They will send me to prison. In two or three years I shall be free. Then I am coming back for you."

He held her in his arms for one brief moment, kissed her again on the forehead, and was gone. Then the tears came afresh to Eulie's eyes. But through her veins coursed a tumult of joy.

A SWALLOW-TAILER FOR TWO

A SWALLOW-TAILER FOR TWO

"ISIDORE? Bah! Never again do I want dot name to hear!

"Isidore? A loafer he iss! Sure! Ve vas friends vunce, unt don't I know vot a loafer he iss? Ven a man iss a loafer nobody knows it better as his best friend.

"Don't you remember by der night uf der two Purim balls? Vot? No? Yes! Dere vas two Purim balls by der same night; der one vas across der street from der odder. Yes. Der one, dot vas der Montefiore Society. I vas der president. Der odder, dot vas der Baron Hirsch Literary Atzociation. Isidore vas der vice-president.

"Isidore unt I lived together. Oh, ve vas such friends! David unt Jonathan dey vas not better friends as me unt Isidore. Everyt'ing vot Isidore had could belong also to me. Unt if I had some-

t'ing I always told Isidore dot I had it. I did not know vot a loafer he vas.

"So it comes der day of der Montefiore ball, unt I ask Izzy if he iss going. 'No, Moritz,' he says, 'I am going by der Baron Hirsch ball.' 'But anyway,' I says, 'let us go by der tailor unt hire for rent our evening-dress swallow-tails.' 'Sure,' he says. Unt ve vent by der tailor's. But dot vas such a busy times dot every tailor ve vent to said he vas so sorry but he had already hired out for rent all der swallow-tails vot he had, unt he didn't haf no more left. Ve vent from every tailor vot ve know to every odder tailor. Der last vun he vas a smart feller. He says: 'Gents, I got vun suit left, but it iss der only vun.' Den Izzy unt me looked into our faces. Vot could ve do?

"'Id iss no use,' I says, unt Izzy says it vas no use, unt ve vas just going away, ven der smart tailor says: 'Vy don't you take der suit unt each take a turn to wear it?' So Izzy says to me, 'Moritz, dot's a idea. You can wear der suit by der Montefiore ball, unt I can wear it by der Baron Hirsch ball. Der dancing vill be all night. You can have it from nine o'clock until it is elefen

o'clock. Dot iss two hours. Den you can excuse yourself. Den I put on der suit und wear it by der Baron Hirsch ball from elefen o'clock until id iss vun o'clock in der morning. Den I excuse myself. Den, Moritz, you can haf it again by der Montefiore ball until id iss t'ree o'clock. Dot iss two more hours, unt if I want it after t'ree o'clock I can haf it for two hours more.'

"Say! Dot Izzy iss a great schemer. He has a brain like a Napoleon. He iss a loafer, but he iss a smart vun. So, anyvay, ve took der suit. Der tailor charged us two dollars—oh, he vas a skin!—unt Izzy unt I said ve would each pay half, unt ve each gave der tailor a gold watch to keep for der security uv der suit. Unt den—I remember it like if it vas yesterday—I looked into Isidore's eye unt I said: 'Isidore, iss it your honest plan to be fair unt square?' Because, I vill tell you, der vas somet'ing in my heart dot vas saying, he vill play some crooked business! But Isidore held out his hand unt said, 'Moritz, you know *me!*' Unt I trusted him!

"So ve went to der room ve lived in unt I put der suit on. It fitted me fine. I look pretty good in

a evening swallow-tail unt Isidore says I looked like a regular aritztocrat.

"'Be careful, Moritz,' he says, 'unt keep der shirt clean.' I forgot to tell you dot ve hired a shirt, too, because it vas cheaper as two shirts. 'Come, Moritz,' he says, 'let us go!' 'Us!' I says, astonished. 'Are you coming by der Montefiore ball, too?' 'Sure,' he says. 'You are der president, unt you can get me in without a ticket. I don't have to wear a swallow-tail evening dresser because I ain'd a member.'

"It took me only a second to t'ink der matter over. I am such a qvick t'inker. If he comes to my ball, I says to myself, I vill come by his! 'Sure, Izzy,' I says. 'As my friend you are velcome.' So ve vent to der Montefiore ball.

"Der moment ve got into der ballroom I seen vot a nasty disposition Isidore got. 'Izzy,' I says, 'go get acqvainted mit a nice lady, unt dance unt enjoy yourself unt I vill see you again at elefen o'clock.' 'No, Moritz,' he says. 'I vill stick by you.' I am a proud man, so I said, very dignified, 'All right, if you vill have it so.'

"Unt Isidore stuck. Efry time I looked around

me I seen his eyes keepin' a look-out on der swallow-tail evening dress. Such big eyes Isidore had dot night! 'Don't vatch me like dot, Izzy,' I said. 'Dey vill t'ink you are a detectif, unt dot I stole somet'ing.' Efrytime I drops a leetle tiny bit from a cigar ashes on my swallow-tail shirt Izzy comes running up mit a handkerchief unt cleans it off. Efry time I sits down on a chair Izzy comes up unt vispers in my ear, 'Moritz, please don't get wrinkles in der swallow-tail. Remember, I got to wear it next.' Efry time I took a drink Moritz comes unt holds der handkerchief under der glass so dot der beer should not drop on der swallow-tail shirt. 'Izzy,' I says to him, 'I am astonished.'

"So a hour vent by unt den comes in Miss Rabinowitz. Ven I see her I forget all about Isidore, unt about everyt'ing else. Oh, she is nice! I says, 'Miss Rabinowitz, can I haf der pleasure uv der next dance?' 'No,' she says, 'I ain'd dancing to-night because my shoes hurts me. But ve can haf der pleasure of sidding out der next dance togedder.' Den she says to her mamma, 'Mamma, I am going to sid out der next dance mit dis gentleman friend of mine. You can go somevere else unt

enjoy yourself.' Dot gave me a idea. 'Isidore,' I says—Isidore was right on top uv my heels—'gif Miss Rabinowitz's mamma der pleasure of your company for a half-hour, like a good friend.'

"Isidore looks a million daggers in my eye, but he couldn't say nodding.

"He had to do it. Unt I found a qviet place where it vas a little dark, unt Miss Rabinowitz sat close by me unt I vas holding her hand unt I vas saying to myself, 'Moritz, dis is der opportunity to tell her der secret of your life—to ask her if she vill be yours! Her old man has a big factory unt owns t'ree houses!' Unt den I looked up, unt dere vas Isidore.

"'V'y did you leave Mrs. Rabinowitz?' I asked. He gafe me a terrible look. 'Moritz,' he says, 'Id iss elefen o'clock unt der time has come.' 'Vot time?' asked Miss Rabinowitz. 'Oh, Moritz knows vot I mean,' he says. So I excused myself for a minute unt I vispered in Izzy's ear, 'Izzy,' I says, 'if you love me, if you are a friend of mine, if you vant to do me der greatest favour in der vorld—I ask you on my knees to gif me a extra half-hour!

Dis iss der greatest moment uv my life!' But Isidore only shooked his head. 'Elefen o'clock,' he said. 'Remember der agreement!' 'A qvarter of a hour,' I begged. I had tears in my eyes. But Isidore only scraped a spot off my swallow-tail shirt unt den he said, 'Moritz, I vill tell you vot I'll do. I vouldn't do dis for nobody else in der vorld except my best friend. You can wear der suit ten minutes longer for fifty cents. Does dot suit you?' Vot could I do? I looked at him mit sorrow. 'Isidore,' I said, awful sad, 'I didn't know you could be such a loafer! But you haf der advantage. I will do it.'

"He even made me pay der fifty cents cash on der spot, unt den he vent off to a corner where he could keep his eyes on der clock unt vatch me at der same time. Dose fifty cents vas wasted. How could I ask a lady to marry me mit dem big eyes of Isidore keeping a sharp watch on der clothes I had on?

"'Id iss no use, Miss Rabinowitz,' I says. 'I had a matter uv terrible importance vot I vanted to tell you, but my friend iss in great trouble, unt ven Isidore has troubles in his heart, my heart iss

heavy!' 'Oh,' she says, so sveet, 'you are such a nobleman! It makes der tears come to my eyes to hear of such friendships!'

"Dot vill show you vot a prize she vas. I hated to tell her a lie, but vot could I do? So I says I haf to go out mit Izzy unt get him out of his trouble, but at der end of two hours I come back. 'I will wait for you,' she says. Unt den, mit a cold, murder eye, I goes to Isidore unt says to him, 'Come, false friend! I keep der agreement!'

"So Isidore dusts off my coat unt says he found a room upstairs where ve could change der clothes. Ven ve got to der room I took der swallow-tail evening-dress coat off, unt der vest off, unt der pants off, unt der shirt off, unt I says to Isidore, 'Dere iss not a spot on dem! I shall expect you to gif dem back to me in der same condition ven der two hours iss up. Remember dot!' Unt den a horrible idea comes into my head. 'Vot am I going to wear?' I says. 'I don't know,' says Isidore. He had already put der pants on. 'Unt I don't care,' he says. 'But if you vant to put my clothes on, for friendship's sake I lend dem to you.'

"You know how little unt fat dot Isidore iss.

Unt you see how tall unt skinny I am. But vot could I do? If I vent home to put on my own clothes I know it would be good-bye Isidore unt der swallow-tail evening suit. I would never see dem again. I couldn't trust dot false face. 'Moritz,' I says to myself, 'don'd leave dot swallow-tailer out uv your sight. No matter how foolish you look in Isidore's short pants, put dem on. You aint a member uv der Baron Hirsch Literary Atzociation. You don'd care if your appearances iss against you. Stick to Isidore!' So I put on his old suit. My! It vas so shabby after dot fine swallow-tailer! Unt I felt so foolish! But, anyvay, dere vas vun satisfaction. Der swallow-tailer didn't fit Isidore a bit. He had to roll der pants up in der bottom. Unt der shirt vouldn't keep shut in front —he vas so fat—unt you could see his undershirt. I nearly laughed—he looked so foolish. But I didn't say anyt'ing—nefer again I vould haf no jokes mit Isidore. Only dot vun night—unt after dot our friendships vas finished.

"So ve vent to der Baron Hirsch's across der street. Ven ve got by der door Isidore asked me, astonished-like, 'Haf you got a ticket, Moritz?'

'No,' I says, 'but you are der vice-president, unt you can pass in your friend.' But Isidore shooked his head. 'Der rules,' he said, 'uv der Baron Hirsch Literary Atzociation is different from der rules uv der Montefiore Society. Efrybody vot ain'd a member has got to pay.'

"Say, vasn't dot a nasty vun, vot? But vot could I do? It cost me a qvarter, but I paid it. Unt as soon as ve got in by der ballroom Isidore got fresh. 'Moritz,' he says, 've vill let gone-bys be gone-bys, unt no monkey business. I vill introduce you to a nice young lady vot got a rich uncle, unt you can sit unt talk mit her while I go unt haf a good time. At vun o'clock sharp I vill come back unt keep der agreement.'

"'Isidore,' I says, awful proud, 'vit your nice young ladies I vill got nodding to do. But to show you dot I ain'd no loafer I vill sit out in der hall unt trust you.'

"So I took a seat all by myself. My! I felt so foolish in Izzy's clothes! Unt Izzy vent inside by der wine-room, where dey was all drinking beer. 'Moritz,' I says to myself, 'you make a mistake to haf so much trust in dot false face. Maybe he

iss getting spots on der shirt. Maybe he is spilling beer on der swallow-tailer. He iss not der kind uv a man to take good care vit a evening dresser. 'Moritz,' I says it to myself, 'be suspicious!' Unt dot made me so nervous dot I couldn't sit still. So I vent unt took a peek into der wine-room.

"Mein Gott, I nearly vent crazy! Dere vas dot loafer mit a big beer spot on my shirt in der front, unt drinking a glass of beer unt all der foam dropping in big, terrible drops on der pants uv der swallow-tailer. I vent straight to his face unt said, 'Loafer, der agreement is broke. You haf got spots on it. You are a false vun!' Unt den Isidore—loafer vot he iss—punched me vun right on der nose. Vot could I do? He vas der commencer. I vas so excited dot I couldn't say nodding. I punched him vun back unt den ve rolled on der floor.

"Ve punched like regular prize-fighters. I done my best to keep der swallow-tailer clean, unt Izzy done der best to keep his suit vot I had on clean, but dere vas a lot of beer on der floor unt ven der committee come unt put us out in der street—my! ve looked terrible! But nobody could make no

more monkey business vit me dat night. 'Izzy,' I says—I vas holding him in der neck—'take dot evening dresser off or else gif up all hopes!' I vas a desperate character, unt he could read it in der tone uv my voice. He took der swallow-tailer off—right out on der sidewalk uv der street. Den I put it on unt I vas getting all dressed while he vas standing in his underclothes, trying to insult me. Unt just ven I got all dressed unt he vas standing mit der pants in his hands calling me names vot I didn't pay no attention to, but vot I vill get revenge for some time, dere comes up a p'liceman. Ve both seen him together, but I vas a qvicker t'inker as Isidore, so I says, 'Mister P'liceman, dis man iss calling me names.' He vas a Irisher, dot p'liceman, unt he hit Izzy vun mit his club, unt says, 'Vot do you mean by comin' in der street mitout your clothes on? You are a prisoner!' So I says, 'Good-night, Isidore!' unt I run across der street to der Montefiore ball. Dey all looked at me ven I got in like if dey wanted to talk to me, but I vas t'inking only uv Miss Rabinowitz. I found her by her mamma.

"'Miss Rabinowitz,' I says, 'I haf kept my

word. I promised to come back, unt here I am!' She gafe me a look vot nearly broked my heart. 'You are a drunker,' she says.

"'Miss Rabinowitz,' I says, 'dem iss hard words.' 'Go away,' she says. 'You look like a loafer. Instead of helping your friend you haf been drinking.' Den her mamma gafe me a look unt says, 'Drunken loafer, go 'way from my daughter or I will call der police.'

"Vot could I do? As proud as I could I left her. Den a committee comes up to me unt says, 'Moritz, go home. You look sick.' Dey vas all laughing. Den somebody says, 'He smells like a brewery vagon.' Vot could I do? I vent home.

"Der next morning Isidore comes home. 'Moritz,' he says, 'you are a fool.' I gafe him vun look in his eye. 'Isidore,' I says, 'you are der biggest loafer I haf efer seen.' Ve haf never had a conversation since dot day.

"My! Such a loafer!"

DEBORAH

DEBORAH

Her name was Deborah. When Hazard first saw her she was sitting on the steps of a tenement with Berman at her side, Berman's betrothal ring on her finger, Berman's arm around her waist. "Beauty and the beast!" Hazard murmured as he stood watching them. He was an artist, and a search for the picturesque had led him into Hester Street—where he found it.

Presently Hazard crossed the street, and, with a low bow and an air of modest hesitation that became him well, begged Berman to present his compliments to the young lady at his side and to ask her if she would allow an enthusiastic artist to make a sketch of her face. Hester Street is extremely unconventional. Deborah looked up into the blue eyes of the artist, and, with a faint blush, freed herself from her companion's embrace. Then she smiled and told the artist he could sketch her. In a twinkling Hazard produced book and pencil.

While he sketched they chatted together, ignoring Berman completely, who sat scowling and unhappy. When the sketch was finished the artist handed it to Deborah and begged her to keep it. But would she not come some day to pose for him in his studio? Her mother or sister or—with a jerk of his thumb—this sturdy chap at her side could accompany her. And she would be well paid. Her face fitted wonderfully into a painting he was working on, and he had been looking for a model for weeks. His mother lived at the studio with him—the young lady would be well cared for—five or six visits would be sufficient—a really big painting. Yes. Deborah would go.

When Hazard had departed, Deborah turned to her lover and observed, with disappointment, that he looked coarse and ill-favoured.

"It is getting late," she said. "I am going in."

"Why, *Liebchen*," Berman protested. "It is only eight o'clock!"

"I am very tired. Good-night!"

Berman sat alone, gazing at the stars, struggling vainly to formulate in distinct thoughts the

depth and profundity of his love for Deborah and the cause of that mysterious feeling of unrest, of unhappiness, of portending gloom that had suddenly come over him. But he was a simple-minded person, and his brain soon grew weary of this unaccustomed work. It was easier to fasten his gaze upon a single star and to marvel how its brightness and purity reminded him so strongly of Deborah.

In the weeks that followed he saw but little of Deborah, and each time he observed with dismay that a change had come over the girl. In the company of her mother she had been visiting Hazard's studio regularly, and the only subject upon which Berman could get her to talk with any degree of interest was the artist and his work.

"Oh, it is a wonderful picture that he is painting!" she said. "It is the picture of a great queen, with a man kneeling at her feet, and I am the queen. I sit with a beautiful fur mantle over my shoulder, and, would you believe it, before I have been sitting five minutes I begin to feel as though I really were a queen. He is a great artist. Mamma sits looking at the picture that he is painting hour after hour. It is a wonderful likeness. And

his mother is so kind to me. She has given me such beautiful dresses. And not a day goes by but what I learn something new and good from her. I am so ashamed of my ignorance."

"Each time I see her," thought Berman, "she grows more beautiful. How could anyone help painting a beautiful picture of her? She is growing like a flower. She is too good, too sweet, too beautiful for me!"

The blow came swiftly, unexpectedly. She came to his home while he sat at supper with his parents.

"Do not blame me," she said. "I prayed night after night to God to make me love you, but it would not come. It is better to find it out before it is too late. You have been so kind, so good to me that it breaks my heart. Is it not better to come to you and to tell the truth?"

Berman had turned pale. "Is it the painter?" he whispered. A flood of colour surged to Deborah's cheeks. Her eyes fell before his.

"He is a Christian, Deborah—a Christian!" he murmured, hoarsely. Then Deborah's colour left her cheeks, and the tears started to her eyes.

"I know it! I know it! But——" Then with

an effort she drew herself up. "It is better that we should part. Good-bye!"

"Good-bye!" said Berman. And his father arose and called after the departing figure:

"The peace of God go with you!"

With an artist's eye Hazard had been quick to perceive the beauty of Deborah, and the possibilities of its development, and, with an artist's temperament, he derived the keenest pleasure from watching that beauty grow and unfold. Her frequent presence, the touch of her hand and cheek as he helped her to pose, her merry laughter, and, above all, those big, trusting brown eyes in which he read, as clear as print, her love, her adoration for himself, all began to have their effect upon him. And, one day, when they were alone, and suddenly looking up, he had surprised in her eyes a look of such tenderness and sweetness that his brain reeled, he flung his brush angrily to the floor and cried:

"Confound it, Deborah, I can't marry you!"

Deborah, without surprise, without wonderment, began to cry softly: "I know it! I have always known it!" she said. And when he saw the tears

rolling down her cheeks he sprang to her side and clasped her in his arms, and whispered words of love in her ear, and kissed her again and again.

An old story, is it not? Aye, as old as life, as old as sin! And always the same—so monotonously the same. And always so pitiful. It is such a tempting path; the roses bloom redder here, and sweeter than anywhere else in the wide world. But there is always the darkness at the end—the same, weary darkness—the poor eyes that erstwhile shone so brightly grow dim in the vain endeavour to pierce it.

Like a flower that has blossomed to full maturity Deborah began to wilt and fade. Her beauty quickly vanished—beauty in Hester Street is rarely durable—Deborah grew paler and paler, thinner and thinner. To do him full justice Hazard was greatly distressed. It was a great pity, he thought, that Deborah had not been born a Christian. Had she been a Christian he could have married her without blasting his whole future career. As it was—Fate had been cruel. Let Hazard have full justice.

But it fell like a thunderbolt upon Berman when Deborah's mother sent for him.

"She has been raving for two days, and she keeps calling your name! Won't you sit by her bedside for a while? It may calm her!"

His heart almost stopped beating when he beheld how frail and fever-worn were the features that he had loved so well. When he took her hand in his the touch burned—burned through to his heart, his brain, his soul.

"Berman will not come!" she cried. "He was kind to me, and I was so cruel. He will not come!"

Berman tried to speak, but the words stuck in his throat. Then, with that sing-song intonation of those who are delirious with brain fever, Deborah spoke—it sounded like the chanting of a dirge: "Ah, he was so cruel! What did it matter that I was a Jewess! What did it matter that he was a Christian! I never urged him, because I loved him so! He said it would ruin his career! But, oh, he could have done it! We would have been so happy! Once he made the sign of the Cross on my cheek. But I told him I would become a Christian if he wanted me to. What did I care

for my religion? I cared for nothing but him! But he was so cruel! So cruel! So cruel!"

It was more than blood could stand. With a cry of anguish Berman fled from the room. In the dawn of the following day Deborah's mother, grey and worn, came out of the tenement. She saw Berman sitting on the steps. "It is over!" she said. Berman looked at her and slowly nodded. "All over!" he said.

When Hazard awoke that morning his servant told him that a strange-looking man wished to see him in the studio. "A model," thought Hazard. "Tell him to wait." Berman waited. He waited an hour. Then the Oriental curtains rustled, and Hazard appeared. He had walked halfway across the room before he recognised Berman. He recognised him as the man who sat beside Deborah when he had first seen her. The man who had his arm around her waist. The man whom he had referred to as a sturdy chap—who had, indeed, looked strong and big on that starry night. And who now loomed before his eyes in gigantic proportions. He recognised him—and a sudden chill struck his heart. Berman walked toward him.

Without a word, without the faintest warning, he clutched the artist by the throat, stifling every sound. The artist struggled, as a mouse struggles in the grasp of a cat. From his pocket Berman drew a penknife. He could hold his victim easily with one hand. He opened the blade with his teeth. As a man might bend a reed, Berman bent the artist's back until his head rested upon his knee. Then, quickly, he slashed him twice across the cheek, making the sign of a cross.

"You might have married her!" he whispered, hoarsely. Then he threw the helpless figure from him and slowly walked out of the room.

The newspapers told next day, how a maniac had burst into the studio of Hazard, the distinguished young painter, and without the slightest provocation had cut him cruelly about the face. The police were on the slasher's trail, but Hazard doubted if he could identify the man again if he saw him. "It was so unexpected," he said. To this day he carries a curious mark on his right cheek—exactly like a cross.

AN INTERRUPTION

AN INTERRUPTION

In the story books the tragedies of life work themselves out to more or less tragic conclusions. In real life the most tragic tragedies are those that have no conclusion—that can have no conclusion until death writes "Finis!" From which one might argue that many of us would be better off if we lived in novels. Chertoff, however, lived in Hester Street, and therefore had to abide by his destiny.

Chertoff was a hunchback. He had a huge head and tremendously long arms and features of waxen pallor. Children who saw him for the first time would run from him with fright and would hide in doorways until he had passed. Yet those who knew him loved him, for under his repellent exterior throbbed a warm heart, and his nature was kindly and cheering. In Gurtman's sweat-shop, where he toiled from dawn to nightfall, he was loved by all—that is, all save Gurtman—for

when the day's task seemed hardest and the click and roar of the machines chanted the song of despair that all sweatshop workers know so well, Chertoff would burst into a lively tune and fill the room with gladness. Then he would gossip and tell interesting stories and bandy jests with anyone in the room who showed the slightest disposition to contribute a moment's gaiety to the dreary, heart-breaking routine.

It was before the days of the factory inspectors, and conditions were bad—so bad that if anyone were to tell you how bad they were you would never believe it. In those days a bright spirit in a sweatshop was no common thing. One day Gurtman announced that there would be a reduction of three cents on piece-work, and a great silence fell upon the room. A woman gasped as if something had struck her. And Chertoff struck up a merry Russian tune:

"The miller in his Sunday clothes
Came riding into Warsaw."

"Why do you always sing those silly tunes?" Gurtman asked, peevishly.

And then Chertoff closed his eyes and answered:

"Perhaps to save your life! Who knows?"

Then he opened his eyes and laughed, and many laughed with him at the very silliness of the retort, but the sweater only disliked him the more for it. It was a curious habit of Chertoff's to close his eyes when something stung him, and it worked a startling transformation in his expression. It was as if a light had been extinguished and a sudden gloom had overspread his features. The lines became sharp, and something sinister would creep into his countenance. But in a moment his eyes would open and a light of kindness would illumine his face.

Twice this transformation had come upon him and had lingered long enough to make the room uneasy. The first time was when Chertoff's mother, who had worked at the machine side by side with her son for five years, was summarily dismissed. Chertoff had asked the sweater for the reason. In the hearing of all the room Gurtman had curtly replied:

"She's too old for work. She's too slow. I don't want her."

They thought that Chertoff was fainting, so

ashen and so haggard did his features become. But when he opened his eyes and smiled the iron rod that he held in his hands was seen by all to have been bent almost double. The other time—and oh! how this must have rankled!—was when Gurtman jestingly taunted Chertoff with being enamoured of Babel. For it was true. Chertoff, in addition to his skill as a workman, was an expert mechanic, and was quite valuable in the shop in keeping the sewing machines in repair. He was sitting under a machine with a big screw-driver in his hand when Gurtman, in a burst of pleasantry, asked him if it were true that he loved Babel. For a long time no answer came. Then the screw-driver rolled to the sweater's feet, crumpled almost into a ball, and Chertoff's merry voice rang out:

"Of course I love Babel! Who does not?"

And then all laughed—all save Babel, who reddened and frowned, for, with all her poverty and with all the struggle for existence that had been her lot since she was old enough to tread a pedal, Babel was a sensitive creature, and did not like to hear her name flung to and fro in the sweatshop. Was Babel pretty? "When a girl has lovely

eyes," says the Talmud, "it is a token that she is pretty." Babel had lovely eyes, and must, therefore, have been pretty. Yet what matters it? Chertoff was eating out his heart with vain longing for Babel, suffering all the tortures of unrequited passion, all the agonies that he suffers who yearns with all the strength of his being to possess what he knows can never be his. Is not that the true tragedy of life? So what matters it if Babel be not to your taste or mine? Chertoff loved her.

He had never told Babel that he loved her; never had asked her whether she cared for him. He had spared himself added misery. Content to suffer, he did his best to conceal his hopeless passion, and strove with all his might to lighten the burden of gloom that was the lot of his fellow-workers. He never could understand, however, why the sweater had taken so strong a dislike to him. Surely Gurtman could envy him nothing. Why should a strong, fine-looking man—a rich man, too, as matters went in Hester Street—take pleasure in tormenting an ugly, good-natured cripple? It was strange, yet true. Perhaps it was that Chertoff's cheery disposition grated upon

the brooding, gloomy temperament of the sweater, or perhaps the cripple's popularity in the sweatshop was an offence in his employer's eyes, or perhaps it was merely one of those unreasoning antipathies that one man often feels toward another and for which he can give not the slightest explanation. It was an undeniable fact, however, that the sweater hated his hunchback employee, and would never have tolerated him had Chertoff not been so valuable a workman, and, deeming it unprofitable to discharge him, vented his dislike in baiting and tormenting Chertoff whenever an opportunity offered itself. And had it not been for Babel, Chertoff would have gone elsewhere. Hopeless though he knew his longing to be, he could not bring himself to part from her presence.

And so matters went until a summer's night brought an interruption, and this interruption is the only excuse for this tale. It had been a busy day, and the sweatshop was working late into the night to finish its work. It had been a hot day, too, and men and women were nigh exhausted. The thermometer was ninety-five in the street, but in this room, you know, were four tremendous stoves

at full blast to keep the irons hot. And the machines had been roaring almost since daybreak, and the men and women were pale and weary and half suffocated. Chertoff had been watching Babel anxiously for nearly an hour. She had lost her pallor and her face had become slightly flushed, which is a bad sign in a sweatshop. He feared the strain was becoming too great, and the thoughts that crowded one upon another in his wearied brain were beginning to daze him. He made a heroic effort.

"Come, Babel," he said, "if you will stop work and listen I'll sing that song you like."

"Sing it! Sing it!" cried fifty voices, although no one looked up.

"Not unless Babel stops working," said Chertoff, smiling.

"Stop working, Babel! Stop working! We want a song!" they all cried. So Babel stopped working and, with a grateful nod to Chertoff, folded her hands in her lap and settled herself comfortably in her chair and fastened her eyes upon the door that led into the rear room. Gurtman was in this rear room filling the benzine cans.

Chertoff began to sing. It was an old Russian folk-song, and it began like this:

"Sang a little bird, and sang,
And grew silent;
Knew the heart of merriment,
And forgot it.
Why, O little songster bird,
Grew you quiet?
How learned you, O heart, to know
Gloomy sorrow?"

He had sung this far when the door of the rear room was flung open and Gurtman, in angry mood, cried:

"In God's name stop! That singing of yours is making my back as crooked as yours!"

Chertoff turned swiftly, with arm upraised, but before he could utter a word a huge flame of fire shot from the open doorway and enveloped the sweater, and a crash, loud as a peal of thunder, filled the room.

The benzine had exploded. In a twinkling bright flames seemed to dart from every nook and cranny, and the wall between the two rooms was torn asunder. Then a panic of screams and frenzied cries arose, and the workers ran wildly, some

to the door, some to the windows that looked down upon the street four stories below, some trying frantically to tear their way through the solid walls. The voice of Chertoff rose above the tumult. "Follow me!" he cried. "Don't be afraid!" He seized Babel, who had fainted, laid her gently upon his misshapen shoulder, and led the way into an adjoining room where the windows opened upon a fire escape. "Take your time," he cried. "Follow me slowly down the ladders. There is no danger."

Once out of sight of the flames calmness was soon restored, and one by one they slowly descended the iron ladders, following the lead of the hunchback with his burden. Babel soon regained consciousness. She looked wildly from face to face and then, clutching Chertoff's arm, asked hoarsely, "Gurtman! Where is he? Is he safe?"

Chertoff smiled. "Do not worry, Babel. He probably will never torment a human being again!"

Babel relaxed her hold and every drop of blood left her face. She began to moan pitifully: "I loved him! I loved him!" She buried her face

in her hands and burst into a fit of weeping. Chertoff's eyes closed. A look of hatred, unutterable, venomous hatred, flashed into his face. He swayed to and fro with clenched fists, as though he would fall. Then swiftly he raised his head, his eyes opened, and a smile overspread his face. "Wait, Babel," he whispered. "Wait!" With the agility of a gorilla he sprang upon the iron ladder and climbed swiftly upward. The bright moon cast a weird, twisting shadow upon the wall of the house, as of some huge, misshapen beast. He reached the fourth story and disappeared through the open window, whence the smoke had already begun to creep. Presently he reappeared with the form of Gurtman upon his shoulder, and slowly descended. With the utmost gentleness he laid his burden upon the ground and placed his hand over the heart. Then he looked up into Babel's face.

"He is alive. He is not hurt much." Then Babel cried as though her heart would break, and Chertoff—went home.

Gurtman lived. He lived, and in a few days the sweatshop was running again exactly as it had

run before, and everything else went on exactly as it had gone on before. Perhaps Chertoff's pale face became a trifle whiter, but that only brought out his ugliness the more vividly. He was a splendid workman, and Gurtman could not afford to lose him. Sometimes when the task was hard he sang that old song:

"Sang a little bird, and sang,
And grew silent;
Knew the heart of merriment,
And forgot it.
Why, O little songster bird,
Grew you quiet?
How learned you, O heart, to know
Gloomy sorrow?"

THE MURDERER

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When Marowitz arrived at the station-house to report for duty, the sergeant gazed at him curiously.

"You're to report at headquarters immediately," he said. "I don't know what for. The Chief just sent word that he wants to see you."

Marowitz looked bewildered. Summons to headquarters usually meant trouble. Rewards usually came through the precinct Captain. Marowitz wondered what delinquency he was to be reprimanded for. He could think of nothing that he had done in violation of the regulations.

Half an hour later he stood in the presence of the Chief.

"You sent for me," he said.

The Chief looked at him inquiringly. "What is your name?" he asked.

"Marowitz."

The Chief's face lit up. "Oh, yes," he said.

"From the Eldridge Street station. Do you speak the Yiddish jargon?"

Marowitz drew a long breath of relief.

"Yes, sir," he answered. "I live in the Jewish quarter."

"Good," said the Chief. "I want you to lay aside your uniform and put on citizen's clothes. Then go and look for a chap named Gratzberg. He is a Russian, and is wanted in Odessa for murder. He is supposed to be hiding somewhere in the Jewish quarter here. You'll have no trouble in spotting him if you run across him. Here,"—the Chief drew a slip of paper from his desk—"here is the cabled description: Height, five feet seven; weight, about 150 pounds. Has a black beard. Blue eyes. Right ear marked on top by deep scar."

He handed the paper to Marowitz.

"Keep your eyes open," he said, "for marked ears. It 'll be a big thing for you if you catch him. When I was your age I would have given the world for a chance like this."

When Marowitz left headquarters he walked on air. Here was a chance, indeed. He had been a

policeman for nearly six years, and in all that time there had come no opportunity to distinguish himself through heroism or skill, or through any achievement, save the faithful performance of routine duty. His heart now beat high with hope. How pleased his wife would be! His name would be in all the newspapers. "The Murderer Caught! Officer Marowitz Runs Him to Earth!" Officer Marowitz already enjoyed the taste of the intoxicating cup of fame.

In mounting the stairs of the tenement where he lived Marowitz nearly stumbled over the figure of a little boy who was busily engaged in playing Indian, lurking in the darkness in wait for a foe to come along. The next moment the little figure was scrambling over him, shouting with delight:

"It's papa! Come to play Indian with Bootsy!"

"Hello, little rascal!" cried the policeman. "Papa can't play to-day. Got to go right out after naughty man."

Suddenly an idea came to him.

"Want to come along with papa, little Boots?" he asked. The little fellow yelled with joy at the

prospect of this rare treat. He was six years old, and had blue eyes and a winsome face. His real name was Hermann, but an infantile tendency to chew for hours all the shoes and boots of the household had fastened upon him the name of "Boots," by which all the neighbourhood knew him and loved him. An hour later, and all that day, and all the next day, and the day after for a whole week, Marowitz and his little son wandered, apparently in aimless fashion, up and down the streets of the East Side. The companionship of the boy was as good as a thousand disguises. It would have been difficult to imagine anything less detective-like or police-like than this amiable-looking young father taking his son out for a holiday promenade.

Occasionally they would wander into one or another of the Jewish cafés, where little Boots ascended to the seventh heaven of joy in sweet drinks while Marowitz gazed about him, carelessly, for a man with a dark beard and a marked ear. In one of these cafés, happening to pick up a Russian newspaper, he read an account of the crime with which this man Gratzberg was charged. It appeared that Gratzberg, while returning from the

synagogue with his wife, had accidently jostled a young soldier. The soldier had struck him, and abused him for a vile Jew, and Gratzberg, knowing the futility of resenting the insult, had edged out of the soldier's way, and was passing on when he heard a scream from his wife. The soldier, attracted by the woman's comeliness, had thrown his arms around her, saying, "I will take a kiss from those Jewish lips to wipe out the insult to which I have been subjected." In sudden fury Gratzberg rushed upon the soldier, and, with a light cane which he carried, made a swift thrust into his face. The soldier fell to the ground, dead. The thin point of the cane had entered his eye and pierced through into the brain. Gratzberg turned and fled, and from that moment no man had seen him.

Marowitz laid down the paper and frowned. He sat for a long time, plunged in thought. Then, with a shrug of his shoulders, he muttered, "Duty is duty." And, taking little Boots by the hand, he resumed his search for the man with the black beard and the marked ear.

It was a long and tedious search, and almost bar-

ren in clues. Two men whom he approached—men whom he knew—remembered having seen a man who answered the description, but their recollection was too dim to afford him the slightest assistance. In the course of the week he had made a dozen visits to every café, restaurant, and meeting place in the neighbourhood, had conscientiously patrolled every street, both by day and by night, had gone into many stores, and followed the delivery of nearly all the Russian newspapers that came into that quarter. But without a glimpse of the man with the marked ear.

There came a night when the heat grew so intense, and the atmosphere so humid and suffocating that nearly every house in the Ghetto poured out its denizens into the street to seek relief. Numerous parties made their way to the river, to lounge about the docks and piers, where a light breeze brought grateful relief from the intense heat.

"Want to go down to the river, Boots?" asked Marowitz.

The lad's eyes brightened. He was worn out with the heat, and too weary to speak. He laid his little hand in his father's, and they went down to the

river. Marowitz walked down a long pier, crowded with people, and peered into the face of every man he saw. They were all peaceful workingmen, oppressed by the heat, and seeking rest, and none among them had marked ears. The cool breeze acted like a tonic upon little Boots. In a few minutes he had joined a group of children who were running out and screaming shrilly at play, and presently his merry voice could plainly be distinguished above all the rest. Marowitz seated himself on the string-piece at the end of the pier, and leaned his head against a post in grateful, contented repose. His mind went ruefully over his week's work.

"He cannot be in this neighbourhood," he thought, "else I would have found some trace of him. I have left nothing undone. I have worked hard and faithfully on this assignment. But luck is against me. To-morrow I will have to report—failure."

It was a depressing thought. He had had his chance and had failed. Promotion—the rosy dawn of fame—became dimmer and dimmer. Now suddenly rose a scream of terror, followed instantly

by a loud splash. Then a hubbub of voices and cries. Then, out of the black water, a wild cry, "Papa! Papa!" Even before the people began to run toward him Marowitz realised that Boots had fallen into the river. A swift, sharp pang of dread, of horrible fear, shot through him. He saw the white, upturned face floating by—sprang swiftly, blindly into the water. And not until the splash, when the shock of the cold water struck him, at the very moment when he felt the arms of little Boots envelop him, and felt the strong current sweeping them along—not until then did Marowitz remember that he could not swim a stroke.

"Help! Help!" he cried, at the top of his voice. But the lights of the pier had already begun to fade. The cries of the people were rapidly dying out into a low hum. It was ebb tide, swift and relentless as death. A twist in the current carried them in toward another pier—deserted—and dark—save for a faint gleam of light that shone through an aperture below the string-piece and threw a dancing trail of dim brightness upon the water.

"Help! Help!" cried Marowitz, in despair.

He heard an answering cry. The faint light had suddenly been cut off; the opening through which it had shone had suddenly been enlarged; Marowitz saw the figure of a man emerge.

"Help! For God's sake!" he cried.

The man climbed quickly to the top of the pier, shouting something which Marowitz could not distinguish—seized a great log which lay upon the pier, and, holding it in his arms, sprang into the water. A few quick strokes brought him to Marowitz's side. He pushed forward the log so that the policeman could grasp it. Then, allowing the current to carry them down the stream, yet, by slow swimming guiding the log nearer and nearer toward the shore, the man was finally able to grasp the rudder of a ship at anchor in a dock. A few moments later they stood upon the deck, surrounded by the crew of the ship; the loungers of the wharf alongside gazing down upon them in curiosity. Boots was safe and uninjured. The moment he felt his feet firmly planted on the ship's deck he burst into wild wailing, and Marowitz, with his hand upon his heart, murmured thanks to God. Then he turned to thank his rescuer, who stood,

with the water dripping from him, under a ship's lantern. The next moment Marowitz's outstretched hand fell, as if stricken, to his side, and he stood stock still, bewildered. The lantern's rays fell upon the man's ear, illuminating a deep red scar. The water was dripping from the man's long black beard. And when he saw Marowitz draw back, and saw his gaze fastened as if fascinated upon that scarred ear, a ghastly pallor overspread the man's face. For a moment they stood thus, gazing at each other. Then Marowitz strode forward impetuously, seized the man's hand, and carried it to his lips, and in the Yiddish jargon said to him:

"You have saved my boy's life. You have saved my life. May the blessing of the Lord be upon you!"

Marowitz then took his son in his arms and walked briskly homeward.

"What luck?" asked the Chief next day, when he reported at headquarters. Marowitz shook his head.

"They must be mistaken. He is not in the Jewish quarter."

The Chief frowned. Then Marowitz, with heightened colour, said:

"I want to resign. I—I don't think I'm cut out for a good detective."

"H'm!" said the Chief. "I guess you're right."

UNCONVERTED

UNCONVERTED

The Reverend Thomas Gillespie (it may have been William—I am not sure of his first name) noticed a tall old man with fierce brown eyes standing in the front of the crowd. Then a stone struck the Reverend Gillespie in the face. The crowd pressed in upon him, and it would have gone ill with the preacher if the tall, brown-eyed man had not turned upon the crowd and, in a voice that drowned every other sound, cried:

"Touch him not! Stand back!"

The crowd hesitated and halted. The tall man had turned his back upon the Reverend Gillespie, and now stood facing the rough-looking group.

"Touch him not!" he repeated. "He is an honest man. He means us no harm. He is but acting according to his lights. He is only mistaken. Whoever throws another stone is an outcast. 'Before me,' said the Lord, 'there is no difference between Jew and Gentile; he that ac-

complishes good will I reward accordingly.' Friends, go your way!"

In a few minutes the entire crowd had dispersed; the tall man was helping the clergyman to his feet, and the first "open-air meeting" of the Reverend Gillespie's "Mission to the East Side Jews" had come to an end. The Reverend's cheek was bleeding, and the tall man helped him staunch the flow of blood with the aid of a handkerchief that seemed to have seen patriarchal days.

"Friend," he then said to the clergyman, "can you spare a few moments to accompany me to my home? It is close by, and I would like to speak to you."

The clergyman's head was in a whirl. The happenings of the past few minutes had dazed him. He was a young man and enthusiastic, and this idea of converting the Jews of the East Side to Christianity was all his own idea—all his own undertaking, without pay, without hope of reward. He knew German well, and a little Russian, and it had not taken him long to acquire sufficient proficiency in the jargon to make himself clearly understood. Then began this "open-air meeting," the sudden

outburst of derisive cries and hooting before he had uttered a dozen words of the solemn exhortation that he had so carefully planned, then the rush and the stone that had cut his cheek, and—he was only dimly conscious of this—the sudden interference of the tall man. He was glad to accompany his rescuer—glad to do anything that would afford a moment's quiet rest. The Reverend Gillespie wanted to think the situation over.

The tall man led him into a tenement close by, through the hall, and across a filthy court-yard into a rear tenement, and then up four foul, weary flights of stairs. He opened a door, and the clergyman found himself in a small dark room that seemed, from its furnishings, as well as from its odours, to serve the purpose of sitting-, sleeping-, dining-room, and kitchen. In one corner stood a couch, upon which lay an old man, apparently asleep. His long, grey beard rose and fell upon the coverlet with his regular breathing; but his cheeks were sunken, and his hands, that clutched the edge of the coverlet, were thin and wasted.

"Rest yourself," said the tall man to the clergyman. "You are worn out."

The clergyman seated himself and drew a long breath of relief. He was really tired, and sitting down acted like a tonic. He began to thank his rescuer. It was the first word he had spoken, and his voice seemed to arouse a sudden fire in the eyes of his rescuer.

"Listen!" he cried, leaning forward, and pointing a long, gaunt finger at the clergyman. "Listen to me. I have brought you here because I think you are an honest man. You are like a man who walks in the midst of light with his eyes shut and declares there is no light. You have come here to preach to Jews, to beseech them to forsake the teachings of the Prophets and to believe that the Messiah has come. But to preach to Jews you must first find your Jews. You were not speaking to Jews. It was not a Jew who threw that stone at you. It is true the Talmud says, 'An Israelite, even when he sins and abandons the faith, is still an Israelite.' But you have not come to convert the sinners against Israel. You have come to convert Jews. And I have brought you here to show you a Jew.

"That old man whom you see there—no, he is

not sleeping. He is dying. You are shocked? No, he has no disease. Medical skill can do nothing for him. He is an old man, tired of the struggle of life, worn out, wasting away. Oh, he will open his eyes again, and he will eat food, too, but there is no hope. In a few days he will be no more.

"He is a Jew. We came from Russia together, he and I, and we struggled together, side by side, for nearly a quarter of a century. It did not take me long to forget many of the things the rabbis had taught me, and to become impatient of the restraints of religion. But he remained steadfast, oh, so steadfast! His religion was the breath of life to him; he could no more depart from it than he could accustom himself to live without breathing. It was a bitter struggle, year after year, slaving from break of day until dark, with nothing to save, no headway, no future, no hope. I often became despondent, but he was always cheerful. He had the true faith to sustain him; a smile, a cheerful word, and always some apt quotation from the Talmud to dispel my despondent mood.

"He argued with me, he pleaded with me, he read to me the words of the law, and the interpre-

tations of the learned rabbis, day after day, month after month, year after year—always so kind, so gentle, so patient, so loving. And all the while we struggled for our daily living together and suffered and hungered, and many times were subjected to insult and even injury. And he would always repeat from the Talmud, 'Man should accustom himself to say of everything that God does that it is for the best.'

"Then Fortune smiled upon him. An unexpected piece of luck, a bold enterprise, a few quick, profitable ventures, and he became independent. He made me share his good fortune. We started one of those little banking houses on the East Side, and so great was the confidence that all who knew him possessed in him, that in less than a year we were a well-known, reliable establishment, with prospects that no outsider would ever have dreamed of. Through all the days of prosperity he remained a devout Jew. Not a feast passed unobserved. Not a ceremony went unperformed. Not an act of devotion, of kindness, or of charity prescribed by the Talmud was omitted by my friend.

"Then came the black day—the great panic of six years ago—do you remember it? It came suddenly, on a Friday afternoon, like a huge storm-cloud, threatening to burst the next morning.

"They came to him—all his customers—in swarms, to ask him if he would keep his banking place open the next day. 'No!' he said. 'To-morrow is the Sabbath!' 'You will be ruined!' they cried. 'We will be ruined!' 'Friends,' he said, in his quiet way, 'I have enough money laid aside to guard you against ruin, even if all my establishment be wiped from the face of the earth. But to-morrow is the Sabbath. I have observed the Sabbath for nearly sixty years. I must not fail to-morrow.'

"And when the morrow came the bank failed, and they brought the news to him in the synagogue. But he gave no heed to them; he was listening to the reading of the law. They came to tell him that banks were crashing everywhere, that the bottom had fallen out of the world of business and finance. But he was listening to the words that were spoken by Moses on Sinai.

"And," the narrator's eyes filled, and the tears

began to roll down his cheeks, "on the Monday that followed he gave, to every man and to every woman and to every child that had trusted him, every penny that he had saved, and he made me give every penny that I had saved. And when all was gone, and the last creditor had gone away, paid in full, he turned to me and said, 'Man should accustom himself to say of everything that God does that it is for the best!'

"And the next day—yes, the very next day—we applied for work in a sweater's shop, and we have been working there ever since.

"We were too old to begin daring ventures over again. I would have clung to the money we had saved, but he—he was so good, so honest, that the very thought of it filled me with shame. And now he is worn out.

"In a few days he will die, and I will be left to fight on alone.

"But, oh, my friend, there, lying on that couch, you see a Jew!

"Would you convert him? What would you have him believe? To what would you change his faith? Ah, you will say there are not many like

him. No! Would to God there were! It would be a happier world.

"But it was faith in Judaism that made him what he was. If I—if all Jews could only believe in the religion of their fathers as he believed—what an example to mankind Israel would be!

"My friend, I thank you. You have come with me—you have listened to my story. I must attend to my friend. May the peace of God be with you!"

The Reverend Thomas Gillespie (although, as I said, it may have been William) bowed, and, without a word, walked slowly out of the room. His lips trembled slightly.

The "second outdoor meeting of the Reverend Gillespie's Mission to the East Side Jews" has never taken place.

WITHOUT FEAR OF GOD

WITHOUT FEAR OF GOD

> The thread on which the good qualities of human beings are strung like pearls, is the fear of God. When the fastenings of this fear are unloosed the pearls roll in all directions and are lost, one by one.
>
> —*The Book of Morals.*

Be pleased to remember that this tale points no moral, that there is absolutely nothing to be deduced from it, and that in narrating it I am but repeating a curious incident that belongs to the East Side. It is a strange place, this East Side, with its heterogeneous elements, its babble of jargons. Its noise and its silence, its impenetrable mystery, its virtues, its romance, and its poverty—above all, its poverty! Some day I shall tell you something about the poverty of the East Side that will tax your credulity.

. . . . .

There lived on the East Side once a man who had no fear of God. His name was Shatzkin, and there

had been a time when he was a learned man, skilled in the interpretation of Talmudic lore, fair to look upon and strong.

Like many another outcast he had come with his story and his mystery out of the " poisonous East," and there was no tie between him and his neighbours save the tie of Judaism. It is a wonderful bond between men, this tie of Judaism, a bond of steel that it has taken four thousand years of suffering and death to forge, and its ends are fastened to men's hearts by rivets that are stronger than adamant, and the rabbis call these rivets " The fear of God."

The heat of summer came on. You who swelter in your parlour these sultry days—do you know what the heat of summer means to two families chained by poverty within a solitary room in a Ghetto tenement, where there is neither light nor air, where the pores of the walls perspire, where the stench of decay is ever present, where there is nothing but heat, heat, heat? You who have read with horror the tale of the Black Hole of Calcutta —have you seen a child lie upon a bare floor, gasping and gasping and gasping for breath

amid the roomful of silent people who are stitching for bread? I would give a year of my life to wipe out a certain memory that is awakened each time I hear a child cry—it was terrible.

But I was telling you the story of Shatzkin.

The heat of summer came on, and his youngest-born died in his arms for lack of nourishment. And while his wife sat wringing her hands and the other children were crying, Shatzkin laid the lifeless body upon the bare floor, and, donning his praying cap, raised his voice and chanted:

"Great is my affliction, O God of Israel, but Thou knowest best!"

And it grew hotter, and the other children succumbed.

"You had better send them to the country," said the doctor, and, seeing Shatzkin staring at him dumbly, "Don't you understand what I mean?" he asked. Shatzkin nodded. He understood full well and—and that night another died, and Shatzkin bowed his head and cried:

"Great is my affliction, O God of Israel, but Thou knowest best!"

Within a week the Shatzkins were childless—it

was a terrible summer—and when the congregation B'nai Sholom assembled upon the following Sabbath and the rabbi spoke words of comfort, Shatzkin, with his face buried in his hands, murmured:

"My sorrow is nigh unbearable, O God of Israel, but Thou knowest best!"

And now the heat grew greater, and the sweatshops, with all their people, were as silent as the grave. The men cut the cloth and ironed it, and the women stitched, stitched, stitched, with never a sound, and there was no weeping, for their misery was beyond the healing power of tears.

Shatzkin's wife fell to the floor exhausted, and they carried her to her room above, and sent for a doctor.

"The sea air would do her good," said the doctor.

"The sea air," repeated Shatzkin, stupidly. "The sea air."

"Keep her as cool as you can. I will call again in the morning."

"The sea air," was all that Shatzkin said. "The sea air."

In the middle of the night the woman cried, "Shatzkin! Shatzkin!"

He looked down, for her head lay upon his lap.

"Shatzkin!" She was smiling feebly. "The baby—Aaron—Esther—dear Shatzkin——"

. . . . .

The congregation of B'nai Sholom had assembled for Sabbath eve worship. The rabbi was in the midst of the service.

"Blessed be God on high!" he read from the book. "Blessed be the Lord of Israel, who holds the world in the palm of His hand. For He is a righteous God——"

"Ho! ho!" shouted a derisive voice. The startled worshippers hastily turned their heads. They beheld a gaunt figure that had risen in the rear of the room, and seemed to be shaking with laughter. It was Shatzkin, but so pale and worn that few recognised him.

"Who are you that disturb this holy service?" cried the rabbi. "Have you no fear of God in your heart?"

The man ceased laughing and stared the rabbi

in the eyes. "No," he said, slowly. "I have no fear of God."

A terrible hush had fallen upon the assemblage, and the man, looking vacantly from one to another of the faces that were turned to him, said, in a hollow voice:

"I am Shatzkin. Does no one remember Shatzkin? I sat here only last week," and, slowly, "my —wife—went—to—the—seashore!"

The rabbi's face softened.

"Good, brother Shatzkin," his voice was trembling. "God has tried——"

"You lie!" cried Shatzkin, fiercely. "Do not speak to me of God! I have no fear of Him! He killed my youngest-born, and I prayed to Him—on my knees I prayed and cried, 'Thou knowest best!' And He killed the others—all the others, and I blessed Him and on my knees I prayed, 'Thou knowest best!' And He killed my wife—my darling wife—in my arms He killed her. And I am alone—alone—alone, and I fear no God! Curse—curse—curse! Ha! ha! ha! ho! ho! ho! Why should I fear God?"

And throwing a prayer-book to the floor he

trampled it under foot, and rushed out into the street.

. . . . .

For many years there worked in one of the sweat-shops on the East Side a shrivelled little man, with keen blue eyes, who was always laughing. From sunrise until midnight he toiled, sometimes humming an old melody, but always with a smile upon his lips. The other workers laughed and chatted merrily in the winter time, and became grave and silent in the summer, but rarely did they pay attention to the old man who seemed always happy. Strangers that visited the place were invariably attracted by the cheerful aspect of the man, but when they spoke to him he would smile and answer:

"I must earn money to send my wife to the sea air!"

And if they asked, "Who is this man?" they would be told in a whisper of awe:

"He has no fear of God!"

And then a significant shake of the head.

. . . . .

The heat of summer is here again. Shatzkin

has been dead a long time, and the story is almost forgotten. But in the Ghetto each day his cry is repeated, and through the heat and the foul air there arises from a thousand hearts the tearless murmur:

"Great is my affliction, O God of Israel, but Thou knowest best!"

THE SUN OF WISDOM

"And therefore," concluded Salvin, stroking his long, grey beard, "we are forced to accept the belief that the object of life is toil. We are the advance guard cutting out the road down which the next generation will travel, who, in turn, will carry the road further along. Our work done—our usefulness ends. We have accomplished our mission, and nothing remains but to make way for our successors."

Young Levine smiled, and rose to go.

"You are wrong, my pessimistic brother," he said, fondly laying his hand upon the old man's shoulder. "You are wrong. Some day the sun of wisdom may shine upon you and you will learn the truth."

Salvin had been the friend of Levine's father, and, despite the inequality of their ages, a firm friendship existed between him and the son. He now blew a smoke ring toward the ceiling, and with a smile of amusement gazed at the young man.

"And what, O Solomon," he asked, "may the sun of wisdom have taught you?"

Levine's face lit up.

"The object of life," he said, speaking swiftly and earnestly, "is love. It begins with love; it ends with love. Without love life has no object. It is, then, mere aimless, wondering, puzzling existence during which the mind—like yours—struggles vainly to solve the riddle of why and wherefore. But those who have once had the truth pointed out to them are never in doubt. To them love explains all. Without love you cannot know life."

Salvin smiled, and then, as the young man departed, his face grew serious. He sat for a long time plunged in deepest thought. Strange memories must have crowded upon him, for his eyes softened, and the lines of his face relaxed their tension.

But at the end of it he only sighed and shook his head gently and muttered, "It is toil! Not love! Toil!"

Levine, meanwhile, was walking back to his work He was a compositor in the printing-shop of the

Jewish Workingman, and it had been his custom, for years, to meet his friend Salvin at the noonday meal in Weiss's café, where they discussed those problems of life that perplex the minds of thinking men. One problem, Levine felt, had been solved —had been finally and definitely made clear. And the magic had all been worked by Miriam's eyes—coal-black eyes that now seemed the alpha and omega of all his existence. For Levine, the object of life was Miriam. The sun rose in order that he might look upon her. It set in order that night might bring her sweet repose.

The seasons—what were they but a varying background against which the panorama of love could unfold itself? He toiled—for Miriam. He lived—for Miriam. He thought—always of Miriam. Could there be a simpler explanation of the mysteries of existence? Poor old Salvin! Poor, blind pessimist! After so much pondering to achieve nothing better than that hopeless creed! Toil? Yes, but only as a step toward love—as a means toward the higher end. If man were created for toil, then man were doomed to everlasting animal existence. Whereas love raised him to

higher planes, transformed him into a higher, nobler being. Could life desire a sublimer object?

Levine trod on air. In his workshop the walls, the lights, the papers—all that surrounded him—sang to him of love. The presses chanted the melody of Miriam's eyes all the livelong day. The very stones in the street seemed to him to sing it: "She is fair! She is fair! She is fair!" and "Love is all! Love is all! Love is all!"

. . . . . .

One day they were married. Salvin was there, with a hearty clasp of the hand for his friend, and a kiss and a blessing for the bride. And laughingly Levine whispered into his ear, "It is love!" But Salvin was stubborn. He smiled and shook his head playfully. But what he whispered in return was, "It is toil!"

They were married, and the universe joined with them in their pæan of love—love that, like the wind, "bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth."

. . . . . .

Do you know that kind of woman whose tempera-

ment is like the smiling sunshine? Miriam was one of these. A light, happy heart—a nature that gloried in the joy of existence—ever ready to sing, to smile, to frolic—sympathetic to all woe, yet realising sorrow only as an external affliction, whose sting she could see, but had never felt—the soul of merriment was Miriam. Her lot in life was an humble one; her task had been severe; but through it all that sunshiny nature had served as a shield to ward off the blows of life. Once—there was a man. For a few hours Miriam's brow had puckered in deep thought. But the man had been foolish enough to ask for a capitulation—for unconditional surrender—ere the battle had been half fought, and Miriam had shaken her head and had passed him by. Then Levine had come. There was a delicate, poetic strain in his nature that had immediately appealed to her, and his soft words fell upon willing ears. He had wooed her gently, tenderly, caressingly—in marked contrast to the tempestuous courtship that had failed—and he had won. It "bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth!"

Love's eyes are keen, and Levine was quick to see the change that slowly came over his wife. He could not have explained it; there was no name for it; it baffled analysis. The first time he spoke to her about it she laughed and threw her arms around his neck, saying, "Can't you see that I am growing older? You cannot expect your wife to remain a silly, giggling girl all her life."

The second time he spoke to her about it she gave the same answer. She did not embrace him, however. And when she had answered him her face became thoughtful. He spoke to her about it a third time. She looked at him a long time before speaking. Then she said, slowly:

"Yes. I feel like a different woman. But I don't understand it." He did not offer to kiss her that night, as was his custom, but waited for her to make the first advance. She did not seem to notice the omission.

He never spoke to her about the matter again. He never kissed her again.

The marvels of a woman's mind, the leaps and bounds of the emotions, the gamut of passion upon which her fancy plays and lingers—all these are

the despair of psychology. Yet their manifestation is sufficiently clear. How it came or whence it came, or why it came, even Miriam herself could not tell. But as a flash of lightning on an inky night reveals with vivid clearness what the darkness conceals, so the sudden revelation that she adored the man whom she had rejected lit up, for a brief moment, the gloom that had fallen upon her heart and laid bare the terrible dreary prospect of her life. It came like a thunderbolt. She loved him. She had always loved him. He was the lord and master whom her heart craved. The fire had been smouldering in her heart. Now it leaped into devouring flame. He loved her! He had fallen upon his knees and had tried to drag her toward him. He had sworn that his life would be wretched without her. And now that she was married he had thrown all the energies of his heart and soul into incessant toil in order that he might forget her. Married? She, the wife of Levine? A cry of despair broke from her lips.

Ah, yes. The lightning flash had passed. But she remembered what its brightness had revealed. She knew now!

For a long time—for many weeks—she often felt an almost irresistible impulse to scream aloud, so that her husband—so that all the world might hear: "I love him! Him only! No one but him." But the heart learns to bear even agony in silence. Miriam settled down into the monotonous groove that fate had marked out for her. The revelation that had come to her so suddenly developed into a wall that rose between her and her husband. An invisible wall, yet each felt its presence, and after many ineffectual attempts to surmount this barrier, to woo and win her heart anew, Levine abandoned the effort and yielded to despair. She never told him, and he never knew—never even suspected. But after that they lived in different worlds—each equally wretched. For there is only one other lingering misery on earth that can compare with the lot of a woman who is married to one man with her heart and soul bound up in another. It is the lot of her husband.

For Miriam there was no consolation. Her secret was buried in her inmost soul; she was doomed to live out her life brooding over it. During the day she often cried. When her husband

came home she met him with a calm face—often with a smile—and then they would sit and talk over trivial matters the while that her agony was eating into her heart.

And Levine—the torments that he endured were beyond all description! Of a sensitive temperament, yet endowed with a clear, critical, philosophic intellect, he sought for an explanation and a remedy in a scrutiny of every incident of their married life, in self-analysis, in the keenest introspection, and found nothing but that insurmountable wall. Nothing seemed credible or tangible save that dull gnawing pain in his heart. Once or twice the thought of self-destruction entered his head. Why he thrust it aside he could not say. He was not a coward. The prospect of fighting his way through life with that burden of misery upon his soul possessed infinitely more terrors for him than the thought of suicide. Nor did he pursue the suggestion sufficiently to come to the conclusion that it was unworthy. It was an alien thought, foreign to his nature, and could find no lodgment. That was all. He lived on and suffered.

Have you ever heard of Levine, the poet? He is a compositor in the printing-shop of the *Jewish Workingman* by day—he writes poetry, and, occasionally, short prose articles at night. He is not a genius. He is not a born singer. But his work is strong in its sincerity, and through it all runs a strain—that world-old strain of pleading—of weakness pleading for strength, of the oppressed pleading for justice. He is not a great poet, but among the readers of the *Jewish Workingman*, and among the loiterers in the East Side cafés, he is looked upon as a "friend of the masses." And what they all marvel at is his prodigious industry. A day's work in the composing-room of the *Jewish Workingman* is a task calculated to sap a man's vitality to its last drop. Yet, this task completed, Levine throws himself with feverish activity into the composition of verse, and writes, and writes, and writes, until the lamp burns low. Sometimes, when he tires, he pauses to listen to the gentle breathing of his wife, who sleeps in the next room. It acts like a spur upon him; with renewed energy he plunges into his work.

The poem which the readers of the *Jewish*

Workingman like best of all Levine's writings is "Phantoms." It ends—roughly translated from the Yiddish—like this:

And when the deepening gloom of night descends
Upon the perilous path and towering heights,
And wild storm phantoms crowd each rocky pass—
Love sinks exhausted, but grim Toil climbs on!

A DAUGHTER OF ISRAEL

A DAUGHTER OF ISRAEL

THERE was a young man with a Christian heart and blue eyes—eyes that made you look at him again and smile at his earnestness—who went among the lowly Jews of the East Side to convert them to the faith of the Messiah whom they disowned. Those blue eyes fell, one day, upon a head of hair that gleamed like gold, fiery, red hair, silken and carelessly tangled, and shining in the sunlight. Then the head turned and the young man beheld the face of Bertha, daughter of Tamor, the rabbi. And Bertha opened her eyes, which were brown, and gazed curiously at this young man who seemed out of place in the Ghetto, and smiled and turned away.

A year went by and the Jews still disowned the Messiah, but a great change had come over this young man. In the vague future he still hoped to carry out his daring scheme, but now all his heart and all his soul and all his hopes of earthly happi-

ness were centred upon Bertha, daughter of Tamor, the rabbi.

In the beginning she had been amused at him, but his persistence and his earnestness won their reward, as those qualities always will, and when this first year was at an end it came to pass that this Jewish maiden wept, as a loving woman will weep, for sheer joy of being loved; she a rabbi's daughter, bred in the traditions of a jealous faith, he a Christian lad.

She had kept the secret of her growing love locked in her heart, but now it became a burden too heavy to be borne, and one night—it was shortly before the fast of Yom Kippur—she poured out her confession into her father's ear. She told it in whispers, hiding her face in her father's long beard, and with her arms around his neck. When the full meaning of the revelation dawned upon him, the Rabbi Tamor, ashen pale, sprang from his feet and thrust her from him.

"A Christian!" he cried. "My daughter marry a Christian!"

He was an old man—so old and feeble that in a few days the synagogue had planned to retire him

and install a younger rabbi in his place. But now fury gave him strength. His whole frame trembled, but his eyes were flashing fire, and he had raised his arm as if he were about to strike his daughter to the floor. But she did not move. Her eyes were raised to his, tearfully but undismayed.

"Do not strike me, father," she said. "I cannot help it. I love him. I have promised to marry him. Will you not give me your blessing?"

"Blessings?" cried the infuriated old man. "My curses upon you if you take so foul a step! Your mother would rise from her grave if you married a Christian! How dare you tell such a thing to me—to me, who have devoted so many years to bringing you up in the faith to which I have devoted my life? Is there no son of Israel good enough for you? Must you bring this horrible calamity upon me in my old age? Would you have me read you out of the congregation? If it were the last act of my rabbinate—aye, if it were the last act of my life, I would read out aloud, so that all the world would know my shame, the ban of excommunication that the synagogue would

impose upon you! Have I brought you up for this?"

But Bertha had swooned, and his rage fell upon ears that did not hear.

. . . . .

The cup of bitterness was full. Rabbi Tamor knew his daughter, knew the full strength of her nature, the steadfastness of her purpose. He had pleaded, expostulated, argued, and threatened, but all in vain. And to add to his misery he saw in all his daughter's passionate devotion to her lover something that reminded him more and more vividly of the wife whom he had courted and loved and cherished until death took her from him. Many years had gone by, but whenever his memory grew dim, and her features began to grow indistinct, he had only to look at his daughter to see them before him again, in all their youthful beauty. His daughter, the image of his dead wife, to marry a Christian! It was the bitterness of gall!

The Rabbi Tamor's father and grandfather had been rabbis before him, and in his veins surged the blood of devotion to Israel's cause. He had been in this country many years, but the roots of his

life had been planted in Russia, in a Ghetto where the traditions of thousands of years still survived in daily life, and in spirit he still dwelt there. To him Christianity meant oppression, persecution, torture. His nature was stern and unbending; there could be no compromise, no palliation; the sinner against Israel was like a venomous serpent that mush be crushed without argument. And now his duty was clear.

When the officials of the synagogue met, a few days before Yom Kippur, the Rabbi Tamor, pale and trembling, but firm in his determination, laid before them the case of a young woman who had resolved to marry outside her faith. The officials listened, horror-stricken, but turned to him for the verdict. He was a wise man, they knew, learned in Mishna and Thora, and they had become accustomed to abide by his decisions.

"The warning!" he said, in a low voice. "Let us read aloud the warning of the ban!"

The new rabbi, who by courtesy had been invited to the meeting, and who had listened with interest to Rabbi Tamor's narrative, raised his hand and leaned forward as if he were about to speak. But

when he heard the clerk ask for the girl's name, and heard Rabbi Tamor, in a hoarse, stifling voice, answer, "Bertha Tamor, my—my daughter!" his hand fell and the words died upon his lips. But he frowned and sat for a long time plunged in deep thought.

. . . . .

Upon the Day of Atonement Bertha fasted. She, too, had gone through a bitter struggle. For a nature like hers to abandon the faith of her race meant a racking of every fibre of soul and body. She had not slept for three nights. Her face was pale, and her eyes were encircled with black shadows. But through all her misery, through all the distress that she felt over her father's grief, she could not subdue the throbbing of exulting joy that pulsed through her veins, nor blot out from her mind the blue eyes of her lover or the ardour of his kisses. But grief and joy only combined to wear out her vitality; she felt despondent, depressed.

The sun began to sink below the housetops. The day's fasting and prayer were slowly coming to an end. Bertha went to the synagogue, where,

all that day, since sunrise, her father had been praying. The news of the proposed reading of the warning had spread, and when Bertha entered the gallery set aside for women in the synagogue, she felt every eye upon her.

The Yom Kippur service is long, and to him who knows the story of Israel, intensely impressive. When it drew near its close the Rabbi Tamor slowly rose, and with trembling hands unfolded a paper. Several times he cleared his throat as if to speak, but each time his voice seemed to fail him. the silence of death had fallen upon the congregation.

"Warning!" he began. He was clutching the arm of the man who stood nearest him to steady himself.

"Warning of the ban of excommunication upon the daughter of——"

"Stop!"

The new rabbi, seated among the congregation, had risen, and was walking rapidly toward the platform. A wave of excitement swept through the hall. Rabbi Tamor's hand fell to his side. For a moment a look of relief came into his face.

His duty was a terrible one, and any interruption was welcome. When the new rabbi reached the platform he began to speak. His voice was low and musical, and after the harsh, strident tones of their old rabbi, fell gratefully upon every ear. He was a young man, of irregular, rather unprepossessing features, and looked more like an energetic sweatshop worker than a learned rabbi. But when he began to speak, and the congregation beheld the light that came into his eyes, every man in that hall felt, instinctively, "Here is a teacher of Israel!"

"It is irregular," he began, in his soft voice. "I am violating every law and every rule. But this is the Day of Atonement, and I would be untrue to my faith, to my God and to you, my new children, were I to keep silent."

When Bertha, in her place in the gallery, realised what her father was about to do she had become as pale as a ghost, and had clutched the railing in front of her, and had bitten her lip until the blood came to keep from crying aloud in her anguish. And she had sat there motionless as a statue, seeing nothing but her father's pale face

and the misery in his eyes. When the new rabbi arose and began to speak, she became dazed. The platform, the ark, and all the people below and around her began to swim before her eyes. She felt faint, felt that she was about to become unconscious, when a sudden passionate note that had come into the speaker's voice acted like a tonic upon her, and then, all at once, she became aware that the vigorous, magnetic personality of the new rabbi had taken possession of the whole synagogue, and after that her eyes never left his face while he was speaking.

"'The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation: He is my God, and I will prepare Him a habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt Him!'

"So sang Moses unto the Lord, and so year after year, century after century, through the long, weary dragging-out of the ages, have we, the children of Israel, sung it after him. Our temples have been shattered, our strength has been crushed, all the force, all the skill, all the cunning of man have been used to scatter us, to persecute us, to torture us, to wipe us off the face of the earth.

But through it all arose our steadfast song. He was our fathers' God! We will exalt Him!"

And then the speaker launched upon the story of Israel's martyrdom. In a voice that vibrated with intense emotion he recited that world-tragedy of Israel's downfall, her shame, her sufferings throughout the slow centuries. The sorrow of it filled Bertha's heart. She was following every word, every gesture, as if the recital fascinated her. It is a sad story—there is none other like it in the world. Bertha felt the pain of it all in her own heart. And then he told how, through it all, Israel remained steadfast. How, under the lash, at the point of the knife, in the flames of the stake, Israel remained steadfast. How, in the face of temptation, with the vista of happiness, of wealth, of empire opening before her, if only she would renounce her faith—Israel remained steadfast. And he told of the great ones, the stars of Israel, who had chosen death rather than renounce their faith, who had preferred ignominy, privation, torture before they would prove untrue to their God.

"He is our fathers' God!" he cried. "Is there a daughter of Israel who will not exalt Him?"

There was a moment of breathless silence. Then arose a piercing cry from the gallery. Bertha had sprung to her feet.

"I will be true!" she cried. "I will be steadfast! He is my fathers' God and I will exalt Him!"

A commotion arose, and men and women ran forward to seize her by the hand. But she brushed them all aside and walked determinedly toward the new rabbi. She seized his hand and carried it to her lips.

"He is my fathers' God," she said. "I will exalt Him!"

And repeating this, again and again, she hurried out of the synagogue. The elders crowded around her father and congratulated him.

. . . . .

It is but a short distance from the heart of the Ghetto to the river, and in times of poverty and suffering there are many who traverse the intervening space. The river flows silently. Occasionally you hear the splash of a wave breaking against the wharf, but the deep, swift current as it sweeps resistlessly out to sea makes no sound.

They brought to Rabbi Tamor, many hours afterward, the shawl which she had left behind her on the wharf. They took him to the spot, and stood near him, lest in his grief he might attempt to throw himself into the water. But he only stood gazing with undimmed eyes at the dark river, babbling incoherently. Once he raised his hand to his ear.

"Hark!" he whispered. "Do you hear?"

They listened, but could hear nothing.

"It is her voice. She is crying, 'I will exalt Him!' Do you hear it?"

But they turned their heads from him to hide the tears.

THE MESSAGE OF ARCTURUS

THE MESSAGE OF ARCTURUS

David Adler sat at the open window gazing contemplatively at the sea of stars whose soft radiance filled the heavens. He was lonely. The stars were his friends. Particularly one bright star whose steadfastness, throughout his many night vigils, had arrested his attention. It seemed to twinkle less than the others, seemed more remote and purer. It was Arcturus.

To a lonely person, fretting under the peevish worries of life, the contemplation of the stars brings a feeling of contentment that is often akin to happiness. Beside this glorious panorama, with its background of infinity and eternity, its colossal force, its sublime grandeur, the ills of life seem trivial. And David, who had been lonely all his life, would sit for hours upon each bright night, building castles along the Milky Way and pouring out his soul to the stellar universe—particularly to Arcturus, who had never failed him. Upon this

night there was a faint smile of amusement upon his face. He was thinking of the queer mission that Mandelkern, his employer, had asked him to undertake that day.

Mandelkern was old and crabbed and ugly, but very rich, and when that morning he had said to David, "I am thinking of marrying," David felt an almost uncontrollable desire to laugh. Then, in his wheezy voice, Mandelkern had outlined his plan.

"The Shadchen has arranged it all. She is younger than I—oh, a great many years younger, David—and she does not know me. We have only seen each other once. Of course she is marrying me for my money, but I know that when once we are married she will love me. But the trouble is, David, that I cannot find out for myself, positively, whether she is the kind of girl I want to marry. You see, if I were to go and see her myself, she would be on her good behaviour all the time. They always are. And I would not know, until after we were married, whether she is amiable, dutiful, studious, modest—in short, whether she is just what a girl should be. And then it would be too late. So

I want you, like the good David that you are, to see her—don't you know?—and get acquainted with her—don't you know?—and er—question her —er—study her—don't you know?" David had promised to do what he could and they had shaken hands, and the firm, hearty pressure of his employer's grasp had told him, more than words could convey, how terribly earnest he was in his curiosity.

By the light of the stars David now sat pondering over this droll situation and smiling. And as he gazed at his friend Arcturus it seemed to him, after all, a matter of the smallest moment whether Mandelkern married the right girl or not—or married at all—or whether anybody married—or lived —or died.

. . . . .

On the pretext of a trivial errand David set out to study the personality and character of his employer's chosen bride. The moment his eyes fell upon her the pretext that he had selected fled from his mind. In sheer bewilderment he stood looking at her. And when her face lit up and she began to laugh merrily, David was ready to turn and run in his embarrassment. He beheld a mere girl.

She could not have been more than eighteen or nineteen at the most, and, although her figure was mature, her face and bearing were girlish. And she was exquisitely pretty. At the very first impression it seemed to David that he perceived a cold gleam in her eye that betokened sordidness or meanness, but in a twinkling he perceived that he had been mistaken. A winsome sweetness rested upon her lovely features. It was probably the unconscious memory of Mandelkern that had given that momentary colour to his thoughts. And now, even before he had completed his admiring inventory of her physical charms, she stood laughing at him.

"You look so funny," she said. "I cannot help laughing."

Then David began to laugh, and in a moment they were friends. To his delight he found that she was clever, a shrewd observer, an entertaining companion. Many things that she said awakened no response in him. It was not until later that he discovered the reason; she had lived all her young years in the active world, in touch with the struggle, the stir of life; he had lived in dreamland with the stars.

When Mandelkern asked David what impression the girl had made upon him, he found, to his amazement, that he was unable to give a satisfactory reply.

"She is charming, Mr. Mandelkern," he said. His employer nodded assent, but added:

"I know that, but is she amiable?"

David pondered for a long time. Then he said:

"Of course, Mr. Mandelkern, I have had no more opportunity of judging what her qualities are than you have. I will have to see more of her. But I will go to see her several times, and probably in a week or two weeks I shall be able to give you a clear idea of her character."

Mandelkern nodded approvingly.

"You are a good David," he said. "I have confidence in your judgment."

And the stars that night seemed brighter, particularly his friend Arcturus, who shone with wonderful splendour and filled David's heart with deep content—and the pulsing joy of living.

. . . . .

When the revelation came to him David felt no shock, experienced no surprise. She had been so

constantly in his thoughts, had drifted so quietly into his life, that, when suddenly he realised that she had become a part of his being, it seemed but the natural order of events. It could have been nothing else. He had been born into the world for this. Through all their many talks the name of Mandelkern had never been mentioned. In the beginning the thought of this sweet, girlish nature being doomed to mate itself with grey, blear-eyed Mandelkern had haunted him like a nightmare. But in the sunshine of her presence David quickly forgot both his employer and the scheming Shadchen, and when it dawned upon him that he loved her, that she was necessary to him, that it was in the harmonious plan of the universe that they should be united forever, the thought of Mandelkern came only as a reminder of the unpleasant duty of revealing the truth to him.

Not a word of love had he spoken. Upon a basis of close friendship there had sprung up between them a spirit of camaraderie in which sentiment played no part. Now, suddenly, David felt toward her a tenderness that he had never known before—a desire to protect her, to cherish her—he loved her.

It dawned upon Mandelkern that David's answers to his questions were becoming more and more vague and unsatisfactory. And one night the Shadchen, becoming alarmed at David's frequent visits to the girl, urged Mandelkern to make haste.

"It makes me uneasy," he said, "to see you sitting idle while a young man has so many opportunities of courting your promised bride."

Mandelkern's watery eyes narrowed to a slit and his teeth closed tightly together. Then he answered firmly:

"Have no fear. She will be mine. The lad is young." And after a moment he repeated, "The lad is young!"

Aye, David was young! His pulses throbbed with the vigour of youth, with the joy of hope, with the deep torrent of a heart's first love. Glorious youth! Thou art the richest heritage of the children of men! Canst thou not tarry? Down the bright beam of Arcturus there came to David a light that illumined his soul. Sitting at his window with gaze upturned to the starry heavens, there came to him the soft, sweet realisation that

the secret of the universe was love, that life's cup of happiness was at his lips, that Arcturus had been but waiting all these millions upon millions of years to see the veil lifted from his eyes, and the bliss of love revealed. Golden youth! Canst thou not tarry?

. . . . .

They were walking along the street as night was falling. They were laughing and chatting gaily, discussing a droll legend of the Talmud that David had recited to her.

"It reminds me," said David, "of a story about the Rabbi ben Zaccai, who——"

A sudden moan and faint cry made him pause and quickly turn. A woman whom they had just passed was staggering with her hands pressed to her breast. David sprang toward her, but before he could reach her side she had fallen to the sidewalk, and lay there motionless. In an instant he had raised her to her knees, and was chafing her wrists to restore her to consciousness. She recovered quickly, but as soon as David had helped her to her feet she began to cry weakly, and would have fallen again had he not supported her.

"What is the matter?" he asked. "Are you ill?"

The woman's sobs increased, and David repeated his question. Then, with the tears streaming down her face, she answered:

"I have eaten nothing for three days. I am starving. I cannot beg. I cannot die. Oh, I am so miserable!"

David assisted her to the steps of the tenement in which she lived, and summoned her neighbours. He gave them what little money he had in his pocket, urged them to make haste and bring the poor woman food and stimulants, and, promising to return the next day, rejoined his companion.

"My God!" he said, "wasn't that terrible!"

"Yes. It was terrible!" she said. There was an expression in her voice that caused him to look at her, quickly, wonderingly. Her face had paled. Her lips were tightly pressed together. She was breathing rapidly. Her whole frame seemed agitated by some suppressed emotion. It was not pity. Her eyes were dry and gleaming. It was not shock or faintness. There was an expression of deter-

mination, of emphatic resolve in her features. David felt amazed.

"Look at me!" he said. "Look me full in the face!"

She gave a short, harsh laugh. In her eyes David saw that same gleam of sordid selfishness that he had observed when first he met her. But now it was clear, glittering, unmistakable.

"Of what are you thinking?" he asked, slowly. Her glance never wavered. David felt the beating of his heart grow slower.

"I don't mind telling you," she said. She hesitated for a moment, gave another short laugh, and then went on:

"I was thinking that that poor woman would not have starved if she had married Mandelkern. I was also thinking that I am going to marry Mandelkern. I was also thinking how terrible it would be if I did not marry Mandelkern, and would, some day, have starvation to fear—like that woman."

Having unburdened her mind, she seemed relieved, and, in a moment became her old self. With a playful gesture she seized David's arm and shook him.

"Come, sleepyhead, wake up!" she cried gaily. "Don't stand there staring at me as though I were a ghost. What were you saying about the Rabbi ben Zaccai?"

. . . . .

David Adler sat at the open window gazing at the swarming stars, whose radiance had begun to pale. The dawn of day was at hand. Even now a faint glow of light suffused the eastern sky. But David saw it not. His eyes were fastened upon Arcturus, whose brightness was yet undimmed, whose lustre transcended the brightness of the myriads of stars that crowded around. Travelling through the immeasurable realms of space, straight to his heart, streamed that bright ray, the messenger of Arcturus, cold, relentless—without hope.

QUEER SCHARENSTEIN

QUEER SCHARENSTEIN

"SCHARENSTEIN? " they would say. "Oh, Scharenstein is queer! He is good-hearted, poor fellow, but——"

Then they would tap their foreheads significantly and shake their heads. He had come from a hamlet in Bessarabia—a hamlet so small that you would not find it on any map, even if you could pronounce the name. The whole population of the hamlet did not exceed three hundred souls, of whom all but three or four families were Christians. And these Christians had risen, one day, and had fallen upon the Jews. Scharenstein's wife was stabbed through the heart, and his son, his brown-eyed little boy, was burned with the house. Upon Scharenstein's breast, as a reminder of an old historical episode, they hacked a crude sign of a cross; then they let him go, and Scharenstein in some way —no one ever knew how—found his way to this country. When the ship came into the harbour

he asked a sailor what that majestic figure was that held aloft the shining light whose rays lit up the wide stretch of the bay. They told him it was the statue of Liberty Enlightening the World.

"It is good," he said.

He found work in a sweatshop. An immigrant from a neighbouring hamlet came over later and told the story, but when they came to Scharenstein with sympathy he only laughed.

"He is queer," they said.

In all that shop none other worked as diligently as Scharenstein. He was the first to arrive, and the last to leave, and through all the day he worked cheerfully, almost merrily, often humming old airs that his fellow-workers had not heard for many years. And a man who worked harder than his fellows in a sweatshop must surely have been queer, for in those days the sweatshop was a place where the bodies and souls of men and women writhed through hour after hour of torment and misery, until, in sheer exhaustion, they became numb. Scharenstein went through all this with a smile on his lips, and even on the hottest day, when

there came a few moments' respite, he would keep treading away at his machine and sing while the others were gasping for breath. And at night, when the work was done, and the weary toilers dragged themselves home and flung themselves upon their dreary beds, Scharenstein would trudge all the way down to the Battery and stand for hours gazing at the statue of Liberty Enlightening the World. And as he gazed, the tense lines of his face would relax, and a bright light would come into his eyes, perhaps a tear would trickle down his cheek. Then, after holding out both arms in a yearning farewell, he would turn and walk slowly homeward.

There was one day—it was in summer, when the thermometer stood at ninety-five in the shade—that the burden of life seemed too heavy to be borne. The air of the sweatshop was damp from the wet cloth, and hot from the big stove upon which the irons were heating. The machines were roaring and clicking in a deafening din, above which, every now and then, rose a loud hissing sound as a red-hot goose was plunged into a tub of water. The dampness and heat seemed to per-

meate everything; the machines were hot to the touch. Men sat stripped to their undershirts, the perspiration pouring from them. The sweater sat as far from the stove as he could get, figuring his accounts and frowning. The cost of labour was too high. Suddenly Marna, the pale, fat old woman who sat at a machine close by the ironers, spat upon the floor and cried:

"A curse on a world like this!"

Some looked up in surprise, for Marna rarely spoke, but the most of them went on without heeding her until they heard the voice of Scharenstein with an intonation that was new to them.

"Right, Marna," he said. "A terrible world. A terrible world it is. Ho! ho! ho!"

They all looked at him. He was smiling, and turning around to look from face to face. Then, still smiling and speaking slowly and hesitatingly, as if he found it hard to select the right word, he went on:

"An awful world. They come and take the woman—hold her down under their knees—hold her throat tight in their fingers—like I hold this cloth—tight—and stick a dagger into her heart.

And they set fire to the house—to the big house—all the smoke comes out of the windows—and flames—bigger and hotter than in the stove there—oh, terrible flames!—and the little boy's face comes to the window—and they all laugh. Ho! ho! ho! Then the whole house falls in—and the little boy's face disappears—and oh, how high the flames go up!"

He looked around him, smiling. A chill struck the heart of every one of his hearers. He shook his head slowly and said to Marna:

"Right, Marna! It is a terrible world."

The sweater was busy with his accounts and had not heard. But the sudden cessation of work made him look up, and hearing Scharenstein address the woman, and seeing others looking at her, he turned upon Marna.

"Confound it! Is this a time to be idling? Stop your chattering and back to work. We must finish everything before——"

There was something harsh and grating in his voice that seemed to electrify Scharenstein. Dropping his work, he sprang between the sweater and Marna and held out his arms beseechingly.

"Oh, spare her! For God's sake spare her! She is an innocent woman! She has done you no harm!"

And as he stood with outstretched arms, his shirt fell open, and every eye saw plainly upon his breast the red sign of a crude cross. The sweater fell back in amazement. Then a sudden light dawned upon him, and, in an altered tone, he said: "Very well. I will do her no harm. Sit down, my friend. You need not work to-day if you are not feeling well. I will get someone to take your place, and—and—" (it required a heroic effort) "you will not lose the day's pay. You had better go home."

Scharenstein smiled and thanked the sweater. Then he started down the stairs. Marna followed him, and with her arm around him helped him down the steps.

"My little boy is playing in the street," she said. "Why don't you take him for a walk to the park where you took him before? It will do you good, and he will be company for you."

Scharenstein's face lit up with pleasure. Marna's little boy had frequently accompanied

him on his walks to the Battery, and to see the little fellow romping about and hear him screaming with delight at the harbour sights had filled Scharenstein's heart with exquisite pleasure. He now sought the boy. He found him playing with his companions, all of them running like mad through all that fierce heat.

"Boy!" cried Scharenstein. "Look!" The boy turned and saw Scharenstein standing erect with one arm held straight over his head, the other clasped against his breast as though he were hugging something—the attitude of the statue of Liberty Enlightening the World. With a shout of delight he ran toward his friend, crying, "Take me with you!" And hand in hand they walked down to the sea-wall.

The boy watched the ships. Scharenstein, seated in the shade of a tree, feasted his eyes upon that graceful bronze figure that stood so lonely, so pensive, yet held aloft so joyfully its hopeful emblem.

He sat like one entranced, and now and then his lips would move as though he were struggling to utter some of the vague thoughts that were float-

ing in his brain. His face, however, was serene, and his whole frame was relaxed in a delightful, restful abandon.

The boy played and ran about, and asked Scharenstein for pennies to buy fruit, and slowly the hours slipped by. As the sun sank, and the coolness of night succeeded the painful heat of the afternoon, Scharenstein moved from his seat and stood as close to the water's edge as he could. Then it grew dark, and the boy came and leaned wearily against him.

"I am tired," he said. "Let us go home now."

Scharenstein took the little fellow in his arms and perched him upon one of the stone posts.

"Soon, boy," he said. "Soon we will go. But let us wait to see the statue light her torch."

They gazed out into the gathering darkness. Scharenstein's hand caressed the boy's curly hair; the little head rested peacefully against his breast, —against the livid cross that throbbed under his shirt,—and the pressure stirred tumultuous memories within him.

"You are a fine boy," he said. "But you are not my boy."

"I'm mamma's boy," murmured the lad, drowsily.

"Yes. Very true. Very true. You are mamma's boy. But I have a little boy, and—dear me!—I forgot all about him."

"Where is he?" asked the boy.

"Out there," answered Scharenstein, pointing to the dim outlines of the statue of Liberty Enlightening the World. "She is keeping him for me! But listen!" He lowered his voice to a whisper. "When I see him again I will ask him to come and play with you. He often used to play with me. He can run and sing, and he plays just like a sweet little angel. Oh, look!"

The bright electric light flashed from the statue's torch, lighting up the vast harbour with all its shipping, lighting up the little head that rested against Scharenstein's breast, and lighting up Scharenstein's face, now drawn and twitching convulsively.

"Do you see him?" he whispered hoarsely. "Boy! Do you see my little boy out there? He has big brown eyes. Do you see him? He is my only boy. He wants me. He is calling me.

Wait here, boy. I will go out and bring him to you. He will play with you. He loves to play."

Gently he lowered his little companion from the post and carried him to a bench.

"Wait here, boy," he said. "I will soon be back."

In sleepy wonderment the little fellow watched Scharenstein take off his hat and coat and climb over the chain. The moment he disappeared from view the little fellow became thoroughly awake and ran forward to the sea-wall. Scharenstein was swimming clumsily, fiercely out into the bay.

"Come back!" cried the boy. "Come back!"

He heard Scharenstein's voice faintly, "I am coming." Then again, more faintly still, "I am coming." Then all became silent except the lapping of the waves against the sea-wall, and the boy began to cry.

It was fully an hour before the alarm was given and a boat lowered, but of Scharenstein they found no trace. The harbour waters are swift, and the currents sweep twistingly in many directions.

The harbour clings tenaciously to its dead—gives them up only with reluctance and after many days. And the statue of Liberty Enlightening the World looks down upon the search and holds out hope. But it gives no help.

THE COMPACT

THE COMPACT

THE paper lies before me as I write. The bitterness has all passed. As a matter of fact it was Sorkin who told it to me as a good story. The paper read thus:

"*Agreement between Ignatz Sorkin and Nathan Bykowsky, made in Wilna, Russia, December 10, 1861: Sorkin goes to Germany and Bykowsky goes to America, in New York. In twenty years all the money they have is put together and each takes half because the lucky one loves his old friend. We swear it on the Torah.*

"*Ignatz Sorkin.*

"*Nathan Bykowsky.*"

It is Sorkin's story:

"The twenty years went by and I came to New York. My heart was heavy. I had not heard from Bykowsky for five years. Why had he not writ-

ten? If he was poor, surely he must have heard that I was rich, and that half of all I had belonged to him. And if he was rich, did he mean to break the agreement? In either case it was bad for me. If it had not been for that last clause—'we swear it on the Torah'! I cannot say. Perhaps I would not have come. For things had gone well with me in Germany. I owned twelve thousand dollars. And I might have forgotten the agreement. But I had sworn it on the Torah! I could not forget it.

"Still, what was the use of taking too many chances? I brought only three thousand dollars with me. The rest I left in government bonds on the other side. If Bykowsky was a poor man he should have half of three thousand dollars. Surely that was enough for a poor man. I had not sworn on the Torah to remember the nine thousand dollars.

"So I came here. I looked for Bykowsky, but could not find him. He had worked as a tailor, and I went from one shop to another asking everybody, 'Do you know my old friend Bykowsky?' At last I found a man who kept a tailor shop. He was a fine man. He had a big diamond in his shirt.

Bykowsky? Yes, he remembered Bykowsky. Bykowsky used to work for him. And where was he now? He did not know. But when Bykowsky left his shop he went to open one for himself and became a boss. A boss? What was a boss? 'I am a boss,' the man said. Then I took a good look at his diamond. 'Maybe,' I thought, 'if Bykowsky is a boss, he too has a diamond like that.' So I went out to look for Bykowsky the boss.

"Then I thought to myself, 'Why shall I be stingy? I will tell Bykowsky that I have five thousand dollars and I will give him half. He was a good friend of mine. I will be liberal.' So I looked and looked everywhere, but nobody seemed to remember Bykowsky the boss. At last I met a policeman. He knew Bykowsky. He did not know where he lived, but he knew him when he was a tailor boss. 'Is he not a tailor boss any more?' I asked him. 'Oh, no,' he said. 'He sold his tailor shop and opened a saloon.' 'Is that a better business than a tailor shop?' I asked him. The policeman laughed at me and said, 'Sure. A good saloon is better than a dozen tailor shops.'

"H'm! I was very sorry that he did not know where Bykowsky kept his saloon. I made up my mind that I would go to every saloon in the city until I found him. And when I found him I would say, 'Bykowsky, I have come to keep the agreement. I have saved seven thousand dollars. Half is yours.' Because I liked Bykowsky. We were the very best of friends.

"I went from saloon to saloon. I am not a drinking man. But as I did not like to ask so many questions for nothing I bought a cigar in every place. Soon I had all my pockets full of cigars. I do not smoke. I kept the cigars for Bykowsky. He is a great smoker. Then I met a man who had once been in Bykowsky's saloon. He told me what a place it was. Such looking-glasses! Such fancy things! And he was making so much money that he had to hire a man to do nothing but sit at a desk all day and put the money in a drawer. So I says to myself, 'Ah, ha! Dear friend Bykowsky, you are playing a joke on your dear old friend Sorkin. You want to wait until he comes and then fill him with joy by giving him half of that fine saloon business!' So I asked the man where that saloon

was. 'Oh,' he said, 'that was several years ago. Bykowsky made so much money that he gave up the saloon and went into the real-estate business.'

"H'm! I began to understand it. Bykowsky had been making money so fast that he never had time to write to me. But never mind. I would go to him. I would grasp him by the hand and I would say, 'Dearest friend of my boyhood, I have come to you with ten thousand dollars that I have saved. Half is yours. My only hope is that you are poor, so that I can have the pleasure of sharing with you all my wealth.' Then he will be overcome and he will get red in the face, and he will tell me that he has got many hundreds of thousands of dollars to share with me. Ah, yes!

"There are not so many people in the real-estate business as in the saloon business. And soon I found a man who knew all about my friend Bykowsky. 'The last I heard of him,' he said, 'he went out of the real-estate business. He took all his money and bought a fine row of houses. And he said he was not going to work any more.'

"That was just like dear old Bykowsky. He was a regular aristocrat. As long as he had

enough money to live on he did not care to work. But he would be glad to see his dear old friend. I would pretend that I did not know how rich he was. I would be open and honest with him. I would keep the letter and the spirit of the agreement. I would not keep back a single cent. 'Bykowsky,' I would say, 'dear, good, old Bykowsky. Here I am. I have three thousand dollars in my pocket. I have nine thousand dollars in good government bonds in Germany. I also have a fine gold watch, and a gold chain and a ring, but the ring is not solid gold. Half of what I have is yours.' And we will fall on each other's shoulders and be, oh, so glad!

"I found Bykowsky. He was not at home where he lived. But I found him in a café. He was playing pinochle with the proprietor. I took a good long look at him. He did not know me, but I recognised him right away. I went over and held out my hand. 'It is my old friend Bykowsky!' I said. He looked at me and got very red in the face. 'Ah, ha!' I said to myself. 'I have guessed right.' Then he cried, 'Sorkin!' and we threw our arms around each other. 'Bykowsky,' I said, 'I

have come many thousand miles to keep our boyhood agreement. Maybe you and I might have forgotten it, but we swore on the Torah, and I know that you could not forget it any more than I could. I have three thousand dollars in my pocket. I have nine thousand dollars in good government bonds in Germany. I have a fine gold watch and a gold chain and a ring, but the ring is not solid gold. Half of what I have is yours. I hope—oh, Bykowsky, I am so selfish—I hope that you are poor so that I can have the pleasure of dividing with you.' Then Bykowsky said, 'Let me see the ring!'

"I showed him the ring, and he shook his head very sadly. 'You are right, Sorkin,' he said. 'It is not solid gold.'

"'Well, dear friend,' I said, 'how has the world gone with you?'

"'Very badly,' he said. 'Let me see the watch and the chain.'

"Something told me he was joking. So I said, 'Please keep the watch and chain as a token of our old friendship. We will not count it in the division. But I am sorry to hear that things have

gone badly with you. Why did you not' (this was only a sly hint) 'go into the real-estate business? I hear so many people are getting rich that way.'

"Then he sighed—and I felt that something was wrong.

"'Dear friend Sorkin,' he said. 'Dearest comrade of my boyhood days, I have a sad story to tell you. A year ago I owned a fine row of houses. I had nearly two hundred thousand dollars. I was looking forward to the time when I would write to you, dear, kind old friend, and ask you to come over to share with me all my wealth. But alas! The wheel of fortune turned! I began to speculate. It is a long, sad story. Two months ago I sold the last of my houses. To-day I have three hundred dollars left. Dear, sweet Sorkin, you come as a Godsend from heaven. My luck has turned!'"

. . . . .

Here there was a long pause in Sorkin's story. Then he said:

"My son, even to this day when I think of that moment, I feel the sensation of choking."

"But did you keep the compact?"

And, in a flash, I regretted the question.

"I had sworn on the Torah," Sorkin replied.

. . . . .

The firm of Sorkin & Bykowsky has recently changed its name to Sorkin, Bykowsky & Co. The Co. is young Ignatz Sorkin Bykowsky. There is also a young Nathan Bykowsky Sorkin. But he is still at school.

A SONG OF SONGS

A SONG OF SONGS

I KNOW a story that runs almost like a song—like that old song, "Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair!"

In the heart of the Jewish quarter stood an old Catholic church, relic of those bygone days ere the oppressed Jews of Russia and Austria had learned that this land was a haven of refuge, and had come to settle in this neighbourhood by the hundreds of thousands. Close by this church lived the Rabbi Sarna, one of the earliest of the immigrants—an honest, whole-souled man who knew the Talmud and the Kabbala by heart, and who had a daughter. Her name was Hannah—and there the story and the song began.

It began in the days when Hannah was a young girl, who would sit for hours on her father's door-step with a school-book in her lap, and when Richard Shea was altar boy in the Catholic church close by, and would spend most of his time on the

doorstep beside Hannah. And they lived a life of dreams, those happy dreams that abound in the realm of childhood, where no thought is darkened by the grim monsters of reality, the sordid facts of life.

In those days Richard's tasks in the service of the Holy Roman Church possessed but little significance for him. It was his duty to swing the censer, to light the candles, and to carry the Book at Mass, and when the task was done Richard's only thought was of Hannah, who was sitting on her father's doorstep waiting for him. Father Brady, the rector of the Catholic church, who was Richard's guardian—for the lad was an orphan, and had been left entirely in the priest's care—was very exacting in all affairs that pertained to his parish, and insisted that Richard should perform his duties carefully and conscientiously. But when the service was over his vigilance relaxed, and, so long as there was no complaint from the neighbours, the lad might do as he pleased. And it was Richard's greatest pleasure to be with Hannah.

They would sit for hours in the long summer

nights, hand in hand, building those wonderful fabrics of childish imagination, looking forward hopefully, enthusiastically, to a future whose basis, whose essence was an eternal companionship of their two souls. There came a night—perhaps it was because the stars were brighter than usual, perhaps because the night was balmy, or perhaps because the spirit of spring was in the air—at any rate, that fatal night came when, in some unaccountable manner, their lips came together, came closely, tightly together, in a long, lingering kiss, and the next moment they found themselves flooded in a stream of light. Hastily, guiltily they looked up. The door had been opened, and the Rabbi Sarna was looking down upon them.

Hannah's father kissed her that night as usual, and she went to bed without hearing a word of reproach or of paternal advice. Whether he had gained his wisdom from the Kabbala or the Talmud I do not know, but the Rabbi Sarna was a wise man. He took a night to think the matter over. Perhaps he felt that the bringing-up of a motherless daughter was no trivial matter, and that there were times when, being a man, his in-

stinct was sure to be wrong, and that only the most careful consideration and deliberate thought could guide him into the right path. For a whole day he said nothing.

The following evening, however, when the grace after meal had been said, and "Hear, O Israel!" had been recited, he laid his hand fondly upon his daughter's head and spoke to her, kindly.

"Remember, Hannah," he said, "the lad is not one of our people. He is a good lad, and I like him, but you are a daughter of Israel. You come of a race, Hannah, that has been persecuted for thousands of years by his people. If your mother were alive, she would forbid you ever to see him again. But I do not feel that I ought to be so harsh. I only ask you, my daughter, to remember that you are of a race that was chosen by Jehovah, and that he comes from a race that has made us suffer misery for many ages."

Hannah went to bed and cried, and rebelled at the injustice of an arrangement that seemed to her all wrong and distorted. Why were not the Jewish lads that she knew as tall and straight as her Richard? And why had they not blue eyes like his?

And curly, golden hair? And that strength? And she cried herself to sleep.

In some unaccountable manner—it may have been that the rabbi told the butcher and the butcher told the baker—the matter reached the ears of Richard's guardian, who promptly took the lad to task for it.

"Remember, Richard," he said, "she is a Jewess. You need not look so fierce. I know that she is a nice little girl, but, after all, her father is a Jew, and her mother was a Jewess. They have always been the enemy of our religion. You know enough of history to know what suffering they have caused. I have not the slightest objection to your seeing her and talking to her, but things seem to have gone a little too far. You must remember that you cannot marry her. So what is the use of wasting your time?"

And, of course, Richard went to bed very glum and disheartened. For a long time he did not see Hannah, and when, after several weeks, they came face to face again, each bowed, somewhat stiffly, and promptly felt that the bottom had dropped out of life.

So the years passed, and the dreams of childhood passed, and many changes came. Hannah grew to be a young woman, and her beauty increased. Her eyes were dark and big, her cheeks were of the olive tint that predominates in her race, but enlivened by a rosy tinge; she grew tall and very dignified in her carriage—and Richard, each time he saw her, was reminded of the canticle, 'Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair!"

He, too, had grown older, had grown taller and manlier; the boldness and audacity that had captivated the fancy of the Jewish lass had developed into manly strength and forceful personality; but his heart had not freed itself from that early attachment. While the service lasted, and the odour of incense rose to his nostrils, and the pomp and ceremony of his religion thrilled his whole being, Hannah was only a memory, a dim recollection of a life-long past. But when, from time to time, he met her and saw the look of joy that lit up her eyes, Hannah became a vivid, stirring, all-absorbing reality. And Richard was troubled.

Father Brady sent Richard to the seminary to

prepare for the priesthood. For two winters Richard pursued his theological studies, pursued them with zeal, and devoted himself heart and soul to the career his fond guardian had selected for him. And for two summers, during which he helped his guardian in the parish work, the young man struggled and fought and battled manfully with the problem of Hannah. They had spoken but little to each other. The dream of childhood had passed, and they had grown to realise the enormity of the barrier that rose between them—a barrier of races, of empires, of ages—a monstrous barrier before whose leviathan proportions they were but insignificant atoms. And yet——

It came like one of those levantine storms, when one moment the sky is blue and the air is still, and the next moment the floodgates of heaven are open, and the air is black with tempest. The Rabbi Sarna came rushing to the house of Father Brady. They had known each other for years, and a certain intimacy, based upon mutual respect for each other's learning and integrity, had grown up between them. And the rabbi poured forth his tale of woe.

"I begged, I implored her," he ran on, "to tell me the cause of her stubbornness. The finest young men you ever saw, one after another, handsome, strong, well-to-do, have asked her, and have come to me to intercede for them. And at last I went to her and begged her, beseeched her to tell me why she persisted in refusing them all. I am an old man. I cannot live many years longer. The dearest wish of my heart is to see her happily married and settled in life. And she persists in driving every suitor from the house. And what do you think she told me?"

A horrible suspicion came into the priest's head, but all he said was, "I cannot guess." The rabbi was gasping with excitement.

"She loves that Richard of yours. If she cannot marry him she will not marry anyone else. I told her she was crazy. Her only fear was that I would tell you—or him. She does not even realise the enormity of it! The girl is out of her head!"

The priest held out his hand.

"I thank you," he said, "for warning me in time. It was an act of kindness. I will see that an end is put to the matter at once. At least, so far

as Richard is concerned. If he is to blame for that feeling on your daughter's part I will see that he does whatever is necessary to remedy the harm he has done. His course in life has been laid out. He will be a priest. I am very thankful to you for coming to me."

The rabbi was greatly troubled. "I do not know what to do," he said. "I am all in a whirl. I felt that it was only right that you should know. But I cannot imagine what can be done."

"Leave it to me," said Father Brady. As soon as the rabbi had departed he sent for Richard.

"What is this I hear about that Jewish girl?" he demanded, sternly. Richard turned pale.

"What!" cried the priest. "Is it possible that you are to blame?"

"To blame?" asked Richard. "I? For what?"

"Only this minute," the priest went on, "her father was here with a story that it made my blood boil to hear. The girl has rejected all her suitors, and tells her father that she will marry no one but you or——"

With a loud cry Richard sprang toward the

door. There was a chair in the way, but it went spinning across the room.

"Richard!" roared his guardian. "What is all this?"

But Richard, bareheaded and coatless, was tearing down the stairs, three, four, five at a time, and the next moment there was a crash that made the house tremble to its foundation. Richard had gone out, and had shut the door behind him. The rabbi, homeward bound, was nearing his door when a young whirlwind, hatless and coatless, rushed by him. The rabbi stood still, amazed. His amazement grew when he beheld this tornado whirl up the steps of his house and throw itself violently against the door. As he ran forward to see what was happening the door opened and Hannah stood on the threshold, the light behind her streaming upon her shining hair. And, the next instant, all the wisdom that he had learned from the Talmud and the Kabbala deserted him. In after years he confessed that at that moment he felt like a fool. For the tempestuous Richard had seized Hannah in his arms and was kissing her cheeks and her lips and her eyes, and pouring out a perfect tor-

rent of endearing phrases. And Hannah's arms were tightly wound around his neck, and she was crying as though she feared that all the elements were about to try to drag the young man from her. A glint of reason returned to the rabbi.

"Hold!" he cried. "Foolish children! Stand apart! Listen to me!"

They turned and looked at him. The Rabbi Sarna looked into the eyes of Richard. But what he saw there troubled him. He could not bear the young man's gaze. Almost in despair he turned to his daughter. "Hannah," he began. Then he looked into her eyes, and his gaze fell. He sighed and walked past them into the house. In an instant he was forgotten.

"Oh, thou art fair, my love!" cried Richard. "Thou art fair!"

. . . . .

When "the traveller from New Zealand" stands upon the last remaining arch of London Bridge and gazes upon the ruins of St. Paul's, the Catholic Church will still flourish. And when the nations of the earth have died and their names have become mere memories, as men to-day remember

the Phœnicians and the Romans, then will there still rise to heaven that daily prayer, "Hear, O Israel!" And in the chronicles of neither of these religions will there ever be found mention of either Richard Shea or his wife Hannah. But, if that story be true of the Great Book in which the lives of all men are written down, and the motives of all their deeds recorded in black and white, then surely there is a page upon which these names appear. And perhaps, occasionally, an angel peeps at it and brushes away a tear and smiles.

A WEDDING IN DURESS

A WEDDING IN DURESS

In the days when the Ashkenazim and the Sephardim were divided by walls of sentiment and pride, as difficult to surmount as the walls that separated patrician from plebeian in ancient Rome, an Ashkenazi youth married a Sephardi maiden. It happened some four hundred or five hundred years ago. Youth and maiden are dust, their romance is forgotten, and we owe them an apology for disturbing their memory. Let us only add that the youth's name was Zalman. May Mr. and Mrs. Zalman rest in peace!

. . . . .

Zalman, the tailor, lived in Essex Street on the same floor with the Rabbi Elsberg. Zalman possessed two treasures, each a rarity of exquisite beauty, each vying with the other for supremacy in his affections. The one was a wine glass of Venetian make, wonderful in its myriad-hued colouring, its fragile texture, and its rare design. The mate of it rests in one of the famous museums of

Italy, and the connoisseurs came from far and near to feast their eyes upon Zalman's piece. Money, in sums that would have made Zalman a rich man in that neighbourhood, had been offered to him for this treasure, but he always shook his head.

"It has been in my family for hundreds of years," he would say, "and I cannot part with it. Years ago—many, many years ago—our family was wealthy, but now I have nothing left save this one wine glass. I would rather die than lose it."

His visitors would depart with feelings of mingled wonder and rage; wonder that so priceless a gem should be in the possession of a decrepit, untidy, poverty-stricken East Side tailor; and rage that he should be so stubborn as to cling to it in spite of the most alluring offers that were made to him. Zalman's other treasure was his daughter Barbara, whose name, like the wine glass, had descended from some long-forgotten Spanish or Italian ancestress. All the lavish praise that the most enthusiastic lover of things beautiful had ever lavished upon that wonderful wine glass would have applied with equal truth to Barbara. Excepting that Barbara was distinctly modern.

Reuben sat in the Rabbi Elsberg's sitting-room, frowning and unhappy; the rabbi, puffing reflectively at a long pipe, gazing at him in silence. Through the walls they could hear Barbara singing. Barbara always sang when she was merry, and Barbara was merry, as a rule, from the moment she left her bed until she returned to it. The rabbi took a longer puff than usual, and then asked Reuben:

"What said her father?"

Reuben gulped several times as if the words that crowded to his lips for utterance were choking him.

"It is well for him that he is her father," he finally said. "I would not have listened to so much abuse from any other living man." (Reuben, by the way, had a most determined-looking chin, and there was something very earnest in the cut of his features.)

"He gave me to understand," he went on, "that he knew perfectly well it was his wine glass I was after, and not his daughter. That I was counting on his dying soon, and already looked forward to selling that precious glass to spend the money in

riotous living. And when I told him that Barbara and I loved each other, he said 'Bosh!' and forbade me to speak of it again."

The rabbi puffed in silence for a moment.

"He evidently has not a flattering opinion of you, my young friend."

"He knows nothing against me!" Rueben hurriedly exclaimed. "It is only because I want Barbara. He would say the same to anyone else that asked for his daughter. You know me, rabbi; you have known me a long time, ever since I was a child. I do not pretend to be an angel, but I am not bad. I love the girl, and I can take good care of her. I don't want to see his old wine glass again. I'd smash it into a——"

Reuben's jaw fell, and his eyes stared vacantly at the wall. The rabbi followed his gaze, and, seeing nothing, turned to Reuben in surprise.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Nothing," replied Reuben, with a sheepish grin. "I—I just happened to think of something."

The rabbi frowned. "If you are often taken with such queer ideas that make you look so idiotic,

I don't think I can blame Zalman so very much." But Reuben's contrite expression immediately caused him to regret his momentary annoyance, and holding out his hand, he said, affectionately:

"Come, Reuben, I will do what I can for you. You are a good boy, and if you and the girl love each other I will see if there is not some way of overcoming her father's objections."

Taking Reuben by the arm he led him into Zalman's shop. Zalman was not alone. A little shrivelled old man, evidently a connoisseur of *objets d'art*, was holding the wonderful wine glass to the light, gloating over the bewildering play of colours that flashed from it, while Zalman anxiously hovered about him, eager to receive the glass in his own hands again, yet proudly calling the old man's attention to its hidden beauties.

Barbara stood in the doorway that led to the living-rooms in the rear. When she saw Reuben she blushed and smiled.

Zalman looked up and saw the rabbi and smiled; saw who was with him and frowned.

"I just dropped in to have a little chat," said

the rabbi, "but there is no hurry. I will wait until you are disengaged."

The connoisseur carefully set the glass upon the counter, and heaved a long, painful sigh.

"And no price will tempt you to part with it?" he asked. Zalman shook his head and grinned. What followed happened with exceeding swiftness.

Zalman had got as far as, "It has been in our family for hundreds of years——" when a shadow caused him to turn his head. He saw Barbara throw up her hands in amazement, saw the rabbi start forward as though he were about to interfere in something, and saw the precious wine glass in Reuben's hand. Mechanically he reached forward to take it from him, and then instantly felt Reuben's other hand against his breast, holding him back, and heard Reuben saying, quite naturally, "Wait!"

It had not taken ten seconds—Zalman suddenly felt sick.

The connoisseur hastily put on his glasses. The situation seemed interesting.

"Mr. Zalman," said Reuben, speaking very slowly and distinctly, yet carefully keeping the

tailor at arm's length, "I told you this very day that your daughter Barbara and I love each other. We will not marry without your consent. So you must consent. If I cannot marry Barbara I do not care what happens to me. I will have nothing to live for. I can give her a good home, and we will be very happy. You can come to live with us, if you like, and I will always be a good son to you. I swear by the Torah that this glass is nothing to me. I want Barbara because I love her, and you can throw this glass into the river for all I care. But if you do not give your consent I also swear by the Torah that I shall fling this glass to the floor and smash it into a thousand pieces."

Zalman, who had been clutching Reuben's outstretched arm throughout this speech, and had followed every word with staring eyes and open mouth, dropped his arms and groaned. Barbara had listened in amazement to Reuben's first words, but when his meaning dawned upon her she had clapped her kerchief to her mouth and fled precipitately through the doorway whence now came faint sounds which, owing to the distance, might have been either loud weeping or violent laughter. The

rabbi's face had reddened with indignation. The connoisseur alone was smiling.

"Reuben," said the rabbi sternly, "you have gone too far. Put the glass down!" He advanced toward the young man.

"Hold!" cried Reuben. "If anyone in this room touches me or attempts to take this glass from me, I shall quickly hurl it to the floor. Look, everybody!" He held the glass aloft. "See how fragile it is! I have only to hold it a little tighter and it will break into a dozen pieces, and no human skill will ever be able to put them together again!"

Zalman was in agony.

"I yield," he cried. "Give me the glass. You shall marry Barbara to-morrow. Do not hold it so tightly. Put it down gently."

He held out his hand. His lips were twitching with repressed curses on Reuben's head. But Reuben only smiled.

"No, good father," he said. "Not to-morrow. You might change your mind. Let it be now, and your glass is safe."

("What a pertinacious young man!" thought the connoisseur.)

"May the fiends devour you!" cried Zalman.

"Now look you," said Reuben, twirling the delicate glass in a careless way that sent chill shudders down the tailor's spine; "it is you who are stubborn. Not I. If you knew how devotedly I loved Barbara you would not, you could not be so heartless as to keep us apart."

"The foul fiends!" muttered Zalman. Beads of perspiration stood out upon his forehead; he was very pale.

"You were young yourself once," Reuben went on. "For the sake of your own youth, cast aside your stubbornness and give us your consent. Barbara! Barbara! Where are you?"

The young woman, blushing like a rose, came out and stood beside him with lowered head and downcast eyes.

"You see," said Reuben, gently encircling her waist, "we love each other."

"The foul fiends!" muttered Zalman.

"Help me, Barbara! Help me to plead with your father," urged Reuben. But Barbara, abashed, could not find courage to raise her voice.

Besides, she kept her kerchief pressed tightly against her lips.

"Would you make your own daughter unhappy for the rest of her life?" Reuben went on. (At every sentence Zalman murmured as far as "The foul fiends!" then stopped.) "Everything is ready save your consent. The good Rabbi Elsberg is here. He can marry us on the spot. We can dispense with the betrothal. Our hearts have been betrothed for more than a year. I want no dowry. I only want Barbara. Can you be so cruel as to keep us apart?"

The glass slipped from his fingers as if by accident, but deftly his hand swooped below it and caught it, unharmed. The tailor almost swooned.

"Take her!" he cried, hoarsely. "In the foul fiend's name take her! And give me the glass!" He held out his trembling hands. With a joyful cry Reuben pressed the girl tightly against his heart, and was about to kiss her when the rabbi's voice rang out:

"This is outrageous! I refuse to have anything to do with marrying them!"

Reuben turned pale. To be so near victory,

and now to lose everything through the desertion of his old friend, was an unexpected, disheartening blow. The tailor's face brightened. Barbara, who had looked up quickly when the rabbi spoke, began to cry softly.

"I have consented," said Zalman. "That was what you asked, was it not? Now give me back my wine glass. I can do no more."

A faint smile had come into his face. It must have been his evil guardian who prompted that smile, for it gave Reuben heart.

"If the rabbi will not marry us immediately," said Reuben, "then I have lost everything, and have nothing more to live for." With the utmost deliberation he raised an enormous iron that lay upon the counter, placed the glass carefully upon the floor, and held the iron directly over it.

"I shall crush the glass into a million tiny bits beneath this ponderous weight!"

"Hold!" screamed the tailor. "He shall marry you! Please, oh, please! Marry them, rabbi! For my sake, marry them! I beg it of you! I cannot bear to see my precious glass under that horrible weight! Don't let it fall! For

God's sake, hold it tight! Oh, rabbi, marry them, marry them, marry them! Let me have my glass!"

The rabbi glared at Reuben, then at the tailor, who was almost on his knees before him, and then at the face of the connoisseur, who, somewhat embarrassed at finding himself observed in that exciting moment, said, apologetically, "I—I don't mind being a witness."

The rabbi married them.

"It is not for either of you that I am doing this," he said, in stern accents. "You have disgraced yourselves—both of you. But for the sake of this old man, my friend, who holds that bauble so high that I fear he will lose his reason if any harm befall it, I yield."

They were married. And then—and not until then—Reuben raised the precious wine glass, glittering and sparkling with multi-coloured fire, gently from the floor and placed it upon the counter. But he held fast to the iron. Zalman pounced upon his heirloom, examined it carefully to see whether the faintest mishap had marred its beauty, held it tightly against his breast, and with

upraised arm turned upon his daughter and her husband. With flashing eyes and pallid lips, he cried:

"May the foul fiends curse you! May God, in His righteousness——"

There was a sound of crashing glass. Whether in his excitement the tailor's fingers had, for one instant, relaxed their grip; whether mysterious Fate, through some psychic or physical agency had playfully wrought a momentary paralysis of his nerves; whether—but who may penetrate these things? The glass had slipped from his hand. That exquisite creation of a skill that had perished centuries ago, that fragile relic of a forgotten art which, only a moment ago, had sparkled and glittered as though a hundred suns were imprisoned within its frail sides, now lay upon the floor in a thousand shapeless fragments.

THE END

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